

THE IVORIES OF THE SO-CALLED GRADO CHAIR

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I. A SURVEY OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

IN the four volumes of Western ivories in which Goldschmidt collected all the material known to him from the Carolingian to the Romanesque period, he established the various schools and their dates with such acumen that his attributions have generally been accepted and utilized as the basis for future research dealing in greater detail with certain groups. Within this great corpus of ivories there is, however, one rather small but important group for which the date and locality he proposed have not been accepted by many scholars. Debate still continues over the date—whose proposed limits extend over more than half a millennium—and the place of origin has been sought on various Mediterranean shores. This is the group of ivories, published in volume IV, which Goldschmidt dated around 600 and attributed to Alexandria (figs. 1–14).¹ One may well wonder why he included this group in his corpus which begins with the Carolingian period. An answer can be inferred from his placing this group before the ivories of the Salerno antependium from the end of the eleventh century, for a few plaques of which ivories of the group under discussion had obviously been used as direct models. However, although for some ivories of the Carolingian Ada Group Goldschmidt had traced precise models from the Early Christian period, he did not feel obliged to precede their treatment by a thorough investigation of the fifth-century Roman ivories which were their source. Why, then, did he make an exception for the so-called Alexandrian group? We can only speculate that he may not have been too sure, after all, of their early date.

Although Goldschmidt, when he began the corpus, had inherited the material collected by Hans Graeven who, had he lived longer, would no doubt have started with the Late Classical and Early Christian ivories, he changed this plan and concentrated on the Carolingian, never embarking on an extensive study of the Early Christian material. This, then, would explain why he did little original research on the disputed group of ivories, but depended on and accepted the findings of Graeven who in 1899 had written the basic study on the group,² a study which was to have the most profound impact on all future writing. According to Graeven there existed in the cathedral of Grado an ivory chair which traditionally was believed to be the cathedra of St. Mark, a gift of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641). Graeven formulated the ingenious idea that the ivories in question, the central core of which contained scenes from the life of St. Mark, had once belonged to this ivory cathedra, which Heraclius had, in turn, pro-

¹ A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Romanischen Zeit, XI.–XIII. Jahrhundert*, IV (Berlin, 1926), 3, 34ff., nos. 112–24, and pls. xxxix–xli; 60, no. 312, and pl. lxxix. In the present study these ivories are published in a different sequence, the reasons for which will be explained in the chapter "The Grouping of the Ivories."

² H. Graeven, "Der heilige Markus in Rom und in der Pentapolis," *Römische Quartalschrift*, 13 (1899), 109ff. *Idem*, *Frühchristl. und mittelalterl. Elfenbeinwerke in photographischer Nachbildung*, Ser. I: *England* (Rome, 1898), no. 29; Ser. II: *Italien* (Rome, 1900), nos. 42–48.

cured from Alexandria. Thus, his dating of the ivories to the end of the sixth century was primarily inferred from various historical traditions, and all archaeological, iconographical, and palaeographical considerations supporting this early date were made to fit the historical framework. As a supporting detail, for instance, he noted that in the plaque with St. Peter and St. Mark (fig. 14) the form of Peter's chair, a *faldistorium* with an armrest in the shape of a dolphin, is classical and is paralleled in an Early Christian ivory, the so-called Carrand Diptych in Florence (fig. 44). Another argument, repeated often thereafter, is the earlier form of the Virgin's monogram for Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ in the Annunciation plaque (fig. 1), instead of that for ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ later commonly accepted.

Before Graeven made the first detailed analysis of the ivories, some of them had been introduced into art historical literature by experts in the field. Maskell, in the first scientific catalogue of ivory carvings in 1872, ascribed the Peter and Mark plaque (fig. 14) to the ninth century³ and Westwood, four years later, adding to this plaque a list of those in Milan, then in the Brera Gallery, proposed the ninth-tenth century,⁴ both dates based on intuition and connoisseurship rather than stylistic analysis or comparison with related material. Schlumberger proposed a slightly later date, the tenth century, for the Annunciation (fig. 1) and a tenth-eleventh-century date for the Peter and Mark plaque.⁵ But Molinier, the distinguished French expert, objected to a tenth-century date and attribution to Byzantium on the basis of his sound knowledge of the Byzantine ivory carvings of this century with which our plaques obviously had nothing in common.⁶ He stressed the mannered poses of the Virgin and the Angel in the Annunciation plaque and argued that these figures were no longer purely classical, but nevertheless stood in the immediate classical tradition—a judgment worth remembering throughout our later discussion. What is interesting is the fact that these dates were proposed before there developed the polarity of Graeven on the one hand and of Venturi, who favored the eleventh century, on the other.

As might have been expected, Strzygowski, who in those years was involved in an intense study of Coptic art, reacted immediately to Graeven's thesis. In his review of Graeven⁷ it is not clear whether he accepts the thesis of the Grado chair; as for the sixth-century date, he warns that such an early date cannot be induced merely from the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (fig. 1), which can be found in later Coptic art. Strzygowski's only interest is to show that the series of St. Mark ivories belongs to Egypt. For this attribution he gives new evidence in his *Orient oder Rom*.⁸ One point is iconographical: Mark, bald-headed and with a pointed beard, not unlike St. Paul, according to Strzygowski is found only in Egypt, and he quotes as parallel the "wooden doors" of the Der es Surian

³ W. Maskell, *Description of the Ivories Ancient and Mediaeval in the South Kensington Museum* (London, 1872), 109.

⁴ J. O. Westwood, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum* (London, 1876), 68 and 368.

⁵ G. Schlumberger, *L'Épopée Byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle*, I (Paris, 1896), figs. on pp. 48 and 629.

⁶ E. Molinier, *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l'industrie*, I: *Ivoires* (Paris, 1896), 77.

⁷ *Byz. Zeitschr.*, 9 (1900), 605–6.

⁸ J. Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom* (Leipzig, 1901), 34, 74ff., and fig. 32.

monastery in the Wadi Natrun (fig. 62)⁹ (not realizing that these were inlaid with ivory). According to Evelyn-White¹⁰ the doors belong in the period of the Abbot Moses of Nisibis (926–927), and while they have no stylistic relation to our ivories, the iconographical parallel they provide is indeed not without significance. In his third reference to the St. Mark ivories Strzygowski accepts a date before the Arab conquest,¹¹ but he is not sure whether the ivories were actually made in Alexandria or perhaps in the Pentapolis—an idea which is based on iconographical evidence since, as Graeven had demonstrated, some of the events represented in the ivories had taken place during St. Mark's missionary work in the Pentapolis. But since in the ivories events taking place in Alexandria and the Pentapolis occur side by side, not much weight can be given to a proposed localization in Cyrenaica, particularly since no evidence of ivory production in that province has ever come to light.

Dealing with the Lazarus plaque (fig. 12)¹² Dalton, in his first catalogue of 1901, ascribed the St. Mark ivories "with some probability" to the chair in Grado and accepted a sixth-century date; but in his second catalogue of 1909 he modified his opinion,¹³ converting to the ideas of Venturi and Bertaux who in 1902 and 1904, as we shall see later, had dated our ivories eleventh-twelfth century because of certain similarities to the so-called Salerno antependium, and ascribed them to an Italian atelier either in Campania or Sicily. From this time on the discussion centered on proving either an early (sixth century) or a late (eleventh-twelfth century) date, and the independently-minded scholar who considered other alternatives was an exception.

The most thorough discussion from the stylistic, iconographical, and historical points of view was that of Maclagan,¹⁴ who after testing the only two alternatives which had gained acceptance, decided in favor of the early date and fully accepted Graeven's thesis of the Grado chair. In spite of what he considered only slight variations, he stressed the contemporaneity of all the plaques, explicitly including the Annunciation plaque (fig. 1), which to many scholars both before and after had proved to be a stumbling block in considerations of stylistic unity. The only exception he made concerned the plaque with the unnamed prophet (fig. 3) which "was added at a later date to fill a material gap . . ." To support the localization of the ivories in Early Christian Egypt, Maclagan introduced as a parallel to the Menas plaque (fig. 5) a fifth-sixth-century marble relief in the Museum of Alexandria (fig. 17)¹⁵ with the same composition depicting the Saint between two camels, a parallel that "makes it almost impossible to doubt that they belong to the same period and school." For the "piled-up architectural background" so typical of the St. Mark plaques,

⁹ This and figs. 49, 59, and 60 published with the kind permission of the Metropolitan Museum.

¹⁰ H. G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādī'n Natrūn*, Pt. III (New York, 1933), 187 and pl. LXV, c.

¹¹ J. Strzygowski, *Hellenistische und Koptische Kunst in Alexandria* (Vienna, 1902), 80.

¹² O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities* (London, 1901), 54, no. 296, and pl. XI.

¹³ *Idem*, *Catalogue of the Ivory Carvings of the Christian Era* (London, 1909), 21, no. 27, and pl. XII.

¹⁴ E. Maclagan, "An Early Christian Ivory Relief of the Miracle of Cana," *Burlington Magazine*, 38 (1921), 178 ff. and pls. I–III.

¹⁵ C. M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menas-Ampullen* (Cairo 1910), 96 and fig. 35.

he referred to the ivory relief in the Louvre (fig. 15) which Strzygowski had already brought into the discussion.¹⁶ Like all scholars who defended an Egyptian origin, Maclagan justifiably pointed to the iconography of the cycle which stresses St. Mark's activity in Alexandria and the Cyrenaica, and to the cult image of St. Menas between the camels. However, he was sufficiently familiar with Egyptian ivory carvings of the sixth century from the numerous pyxides and other works to realize that their style is not close to that of our group, and to find a way out of this dilemma he, like Strzygowski before him, suggested the possibility of an origin in the Pentapolis. Here, as one can sense, is the weak point in his argument. His final conclusion is that "there is nothing in this history to militate against the tradition that the St. Mark ivories at Milan, and with them the other reliefs belonging to the group, once decorated the chair." In his opinion, the chair may have had about thirty panels, but neither he nor any other scholar defending the "chair theory" has ever attempted to reconstruct such a chair along the line of the Maximianus cathedra, our only guide for such a reconstruction. Finally, he takes issue with Bertaux's theory that our ivories belong to the same period as the Salerno antependium plaques and calls attention, among other details, to the different rendering of the eyes—one of the points I shall discuss in greater detail later (pp. 77 ff.).

Like Maclagan, Goldschmidt also considered only the two alternatives previously formulated. Although unsure about the "throne theory," he nevertheless accepts an early date around 600 and supports it with additional stylistic details. The architectural background of the Lazarus ivory (fig. 12) is compared with a walled city in one of the miniatures of the Codex Sinopensis in Paris (fig. 19),¹⁷ a manuscript whose dating in the sixth century is generally accepted, and the background of the Menas plaque (fig. 5) is paralleled by that of the Mark portrait in the Rossano codex (fig. 18)¹⁸ whose sixth-century date has likewise not been questioned. Concerning the relation of the plaques to the Salerno ivories, he stresses a considerable time difference, despite the fact that the Nativity (fig. 2) and the Cana Miracle (fig. 13) were what he considers "exact models" for the Salerno pieces (figs. 28 and 33).

Margaret Longhurst, in her catalogue, accepted the sixth-century date but questioned the attribution to Alexandria. Two details in her discussion of the two pieces in the Victoria and Albert Museum are noteworthy. For the iconography of the Peter and Mark plaque (fig. 14) she refers to a fresco of the twelfth-thirteenth century in the crypt of the cathedral of Aquileia which in her opinion "shows a considerable resemblance." She also points out an important detail in the Cana plaque (fig. 13) in which she identifies the object in the hand of the servant in the center as a wine lifter of the type which in Greco-Roman Egypt is found in glass (text fig. B, p. 61).¹⁹ Since her catalogue of 1926 no more original

¹⁶ Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom*, 71 ff. and figs. 30–1.

¹⁷ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 3 and fig. 32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fig. 33.

¹⁹ M. H. Longhurst, *Catalogue of Carvings in Ivory, Victoria and Albert Museum*, Pt. I (London, 1927), 32–33 and pl. x. For the fresco in Aquileia, cf. O. Demus, *Romanische Wandmalerei* (Munich, 1968), fig. 58. For the wine lifter, cf. p. 61.

observations have been added to the controversy in defense of the early date. The catalogue of the exhibition of Lombard art in Zürich (1948–49),²⁰ at which the Milan ivories were exhibited, confines itself to an outline of the opposing theories, but a preference for the early date is indicated in the caption “Egyptian-Alexandrian(?), 6. century(?)”. Only the Menas plaque (fig. 5) is accepted with certainty as the product of an Alexandrian workshop of the sixth century, while the Annunciation (fig. 1) is considered a Byzantine work of the seventh century, a theory which, if accepted, would of course disprove the concept of the unity of the group and thereby the entire “throne theory.” The same inclination toward the early date is found in a detailed review of the Zürich exhibition by Ottino della Chiesa,²¹ who examines in some detail the stylistic differences between the Salerno and the St. Mark ivories and points out dissimilarities in their spatial concepts, and in the gestures and expressions. He defines the Salerno ivories as three-dimensional and those of the St. Mark series as two-dimensional, with the figures not standing firmly on the ground. Here for the first time formal aspects are introduced which indeed must be taken into consideration in any discussion of the chronological problem involved.

As early as 1902 Graeven’s sixth-century date was challenged by Venturi, who dealt separately with the Annunciation ivory (fig. 1) and the ivories with the life of St. Mark.²² The former he praised as an example of “grandezza del tipo bizantino,” as expressed in the frescoes of S. Maria Antiqua and the miniatures of the Vatican Bible, cod. Reg. gr. 1—monuments which, it must be realized, are centuries apart, the former being essentially sixth-eighth and the latter tenth century! Venturi preferred a tenth-century date for the ivory since this century represented “the apex of Byzantine art.” In the meantime the publication of the corpus of the Byzantine ivories, by far the majority of which belong to the tenth century, appeared,²³ and there is not a single ivory in it that shows the faintest similarity to the Annunciation plaque; the same is true where the miniatures of the cod. Reg. gr. 1 are concerned.²⁴ As for the group at large, Venturi claimed that it no longer represents the feeling of the Late Classical age, but the “select style of the second golden age of Byzantium,” and stressing the closeness of the Salerno antependium ivories to our group, as measured by their distance from the classical sources, he proposed for both a twelfth-century date. It is this proposal that started a chain reaction which continues to this day.

A close relationship between the Salerno ivories and the “Grado chair group” was emphasized and elaborated upon by Bertaux²⁵ who could not conceive of their being separated by five centuries. He felt that they shared something

²⁰ *Kunstschätze der Lombardei*, Catalogue of the Exhibition at Kunsthaus Zürich, Nov. 1948–March 1949, 63 ff.

²¹ A. Ottino della Chiesa, “Gli avori delle collezioni lombarde alla Mostra di Zurigo,” *Boll. d’Arte*, 34 (1949), 257 ff. and figs. 6–9.

²² A. Venturi, *Storia dell’arte italiana*, II (Milan, 1902), 608 and fig. 439; 618 ff. and figs. 451–57.

²³ A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XII. Jahrhunderts*, I: *Kästen* (Berlin, 1930); II: *Reliefs* (Berlin, 1934).

²⁴ *Miniature della Bibbia Cod. Vat. Regin. greco 1 e del Salterio Cod. Vat. Palat. greco 381*, Collezione paleografica Vaticana, fasc. I (Milan, 1905).

²⁵ E. Bertaux, *L’art dans l’Italie Méridionale*, I (Paris, 1904), 434 ff. and fig. 179.

which set them apart from all known Byzantine and Latin ivories. Still another idea was added to the discussion by Toesca²⁶ who, considering our ivories to be the work of eastern artists, claimed Muslim influence in the architectural background of our ivories without, however, adducing any concrete evidence. The most eloquent defender of the late date, on several occasions, has been Volbach. In his first publication of the ivories,²⁷ he dates our group in the eleventh-twelfth century, thus suggesting for them a date possibly even later than the Salerno ivories, for which he accepts a date in the second half of the eleventh century. At the same time he assumes the strong influence of Early Christian, possibly Egyptian models. In a lecture held at a congress in Pavia²⁸ he supports in greater detail the late date. He doubts the theory of the Grado chair as well as the idea that the ivories might have belonged to a cathedra; nor, in his opinion, do the style or details of the costumes fit the sixth century. The mannerism in the treatment of the eyes and hair is especially singled out as a late feature, supposedly not occurring before the year 1000, and this claim he supports by a comparison with the Byzantine ivory plaque of the Forty Martyrs, generally dated in the tenth century²⁹—a parallel whose cogency I admittedly fail to see. As the strongest argument against the early date, Volbach elaborates on Toesca's suggestion of Islamic influence. The bulbous dome is given as evidence, and in the plaque of the Baptism (fig. 9) the architecture with the crenellation is termed "perfectly Islamic." But no specific Islamic monument is mentioned, and it is not clear which phase of Islamic art Volbach believes to be reflected in the ivories. On one point he becomes more precise: he now assumes that the St. Mark ivories were produced before 1084, i.e., that they precede the Salerno antependium. Again, in his catalogue of the Late Classical and Early Christian ivories,³⁰ he reiterates that the ivories of our group should be dated in the eleventh century, shortly before those of Salerno. He considers Sicily a possible place of origin, while in his earlier writings he had posed two alternatives: Sicily and Syria. His eleventh-century date has found its main advocates in Italy, where it originated. Bovini³¹ in the catalogue of the great Ravenna Exhibition of ivories follows Volbach in all essential points.³²

In 1942 Carl Nordenfalk introduced new evidence into the debate of the style and date of the St. Mark ivories³³ when he noted a surprisingly close simi-

²⁶ P. Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, I, Pt. 3 (Turin, 1927), 850 and 908 note 76.

²⁷ F. Volbach, G. Salles, G. Duthuit, *Art byzantin* (Paris [n.d.]), 44 and pl. 23 C-D; 46 and pls. 30-31.

²⁸ F. Volbach, "Gli avori della 'Cattedra di S. Marco'. Arte del primo millennio," *Atti del Convegno di Pavia (1950) per lo studio dell'arte dell'alto medio evo* (Turin, 1950), 134ff. and pls. XLII-XLIV.

²⁹ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, II: *Reliefs*, pl. III.

³⁰ W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, 2nd ed. (Mainz, 1952), 101ff., nos. 237-49, 251, and pls. 66-68.

³¹ G. Bovini and L. B. Ottolenghi, *Catalogo della mostra degli avori* (Ravenna, 1956), 112, 114ff., nos. 111-12, 114-21, and figs. 168-69, 171-78.

³² An attempt by G. Belloni ("Gli avori di San Mena fra i cammelli e della supposta 'Cattedra di San Marco in Grado' delle Civiche raccolte d'arte di Milano," *Riv. Arch. Crist.*, 28 (1952), 133ff. and figs. 1-2) to single out the Menas plaque (fig. 5) as far superior to all the others, and to ascribe it to the sixth century and the others to as late as the thirteenth or even the early fourteenth century seems to us an unconvincing attempt to solve by compromise the controversy of an early or late date.

³³ C. Nordenfalk, "Eastern Style Elements in the Book of Lindisfarne," *Acta Archaeologica*, 13 (1942), 161ff. and figs. 4, 6, 8, 9.

larity between the faces of our ivories and those of the evangelists of the Lindisfarne Gospels (figs. 50–52), pointing out in particular the use of double lines to indicate the eyelids, the straight tubular noses, and the treatment of the hair, particularly the ringlets and the S-shaped locks. He dated the Lindisfarne Gospels to the early eighth century,³⁴ and deduced that this date “implies a definite *terminus ante quem* for the ivories.” As the place of origin of the ivories he assumed the Eastern Mediterranean, which had become the heart of the Arab empire, but he excluded neither Alexandria nor Constantinople as possibilities. Saxl³⁵ denied the close connection between the Lindisfarne miniatures and the ivories and considered the features they share as sub-antique, with a common root in Palmyrene art. However, when Bruce-Mitford, in his text to the Lindisfarne Gospels, dealt in detail with the problem of the relation of the miniatures to the ivories,³⁶ he repudiated Saxl’s parallels with earlier provincial Roman monuments as too general and accepted in principle Nordenfalk’s thesis of the very specific resemblances, with only slight modifications. He doubted that there existed any Eastern manuscripts with miniatures displaying precisely the same linear treatment, which he considered to be characteristic of the ivory sculptures under discussion but not of Eastern miniature painting as, for instance, the Rossano Gospels. He, therefore, believes that “the ivories themselves of the St. Mark school came to Northumbria, whether accompanied by manuscripts from the same milieu or not.”

Before concluding this survey, which reveals such apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion, I should like to mention Bettini’s attribution of the ivories to a period not earlier than the seventh-eighth century,³⁷ a dating for which he gives no reason except that in his opinion they are later than the plaque in Trier representing the Transfer of Relics,³⁸ which he attributes to the first half of the seventh century. In view of the discussion later in this study, this dating should be remembered.

II. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE EARLY DATE

A. THE LITERARY BASIS FOR AN IVORY CATHEDRA OF ST. MARK IN GRADO

In previous writings the primary evidence for the early date of the St. Mark plaques has been seen in their association with a cathedra of St. Mark given to Grado by the Emperor Heraclius. How convincing is this evidence, first adduced by Graeven and subsequently repeated by so many scholars? A very

³⁴ Later (*Early Medieval Painting* [Skira, 1957], 121 and pl. p. 117) Nordenfalk suggested the late seventh century. T. J. Brown and R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford in the text to the facsimile edition (*Codex Lindisfarnensis*, II [Olten-Lausanne, 1960], 13) more precisely determined the date as shortly before 698.

³⁵ F. Saxl, “The Ruthwell Cross,” *England and the Mediterranean Tradition*, Warburg and Courtauld Institutes (Oxford, 1945), 17–18.

³⁶ Bruce-Mitford, *op. cit.*, 168ff. and pls. 29–31.

³⁷ S. Bettini, *La scultura bizantina*, I (Florence, 1944), 61. St. Gaselee (*The Art of Egypt through the Ages* [London, 1931], 56 and pls. 251–2), unburdened by any controversy, considers the three London plaques Coptic and implies a seventh- to eighth-century date.

³⁸ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 70, no. 43, and pl. 45.

early reference to a cathedra appears in the *Cronaca Veneziana* of Johannes Diaconus, written in the early eleventh century, which says: . . . *Heraclius post hec augustus beatissimi Marci sedem, quam dudum Helena Constantini mater de Alexandria tulerat, sanctorum fultus amore direxit, ubi et actenus veneratur pariter cum cathedra in qua beatus martir sederat Hermachoras*.³⁹ From this passage we learn that Grado had two chairs, the one of St. Mark and the other of his pupil St. Hermagoras, but we learn nothing about the materials in which each was executed. An even earlier passage is found in the Acts of the Council of Mantua of A.D. 827 which reads: (*Paulus patriarcha*) *ex civitate Aquileiensi, et de propria sede ad Gradus insulam, plebem suam, confugiens . . . sedes sanctorum Marci et Hermachorae secum ad eandem insulam detulit*.⁴⁰ Once more not the slightest detail is mentioned.

The problem of the two cathedrae, one of St. Mark and the other of St. Hermagoras, becomes complicated by the fact that in the Middle Ages there appears in Venice a throne connected with St. Mark. This is the marble throne, now in the Tesoro di San Marco, which before 1534 stood in the main apse behind the high altar.⁴¹ Garrucci⁴² believed this to be the throne of St. Mark which presumably came with the Saint's relics directly from Alexandria to Venice in 828. In his opinion the Grado throne could not have been the cathedra of St. Mark because the Aquileian Acts of St. Mark explicitly mention a throne of ivory: . . . *usque in hodiernam diem . . . in eadem ecclesia perseverat, ex ebore utique antiquo cathedra, politis compacta tabulis: in qua quidem sedisse illum, dum evangelicas paginas exararet, priscorum non reticuit memoria relatorum . . .*⁴³ However, it does not seem very likely that there existed two chairs of St. Mark, one in Grado and the other in nearby Venice, and one is justified in raising the question of whether the one mentioned as having been in Grado is not the same which at some time in the Middle Ages was removed from Grado and brought to Venice, where the Venetians venerated it as the most esteemed relic of their patron saint.⁴⁴ Grabar has shown that the throne actually was a reliquary and one should keep in mind the eagerness of the Venetians to collect any and all relics of St. Mark. While admittedly such a theory of a transfer is hypothetical, this solution has the advantage of making unnecessary the assumption of two cathedrae of St. Mark and it does agree with the sources, which mention that in the early period there were two chairs in Grado but never say that both of them were of ivory. Only where a single chair is mentioned, as in the Aquileian Acts, is this material explicitly mentioned. Thus we assume that of the two cathedrae which Grado once possessed, one was of ivory and the other of marble.

³⁹ G. Monticolo. "La cronaca veneziana del diacono Giovanni," *Cronache Veneziane antichissime*, I, Istituto Storico Italiano, Fonti per la Storia d'Italia (Rome, 1890), 62-63.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 63, note 1.

⁴¹ The most recent writings about this throne: A. Grabar, "La 'Sedia di San Marco' à Venise," *Cah. Arch.*, 7 (1954), 19 ff.; P. L. Zovatto, "La cattedra reliquiario di San Marco a Venezia," *Aquileia Nostra*, 26 (1955), 41 ff.

⁴² R. Garrucci, *Storia dell'arte cristiana*, VI (Prato 1880), 16.

⁴³ *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, III (Venice, 1738), 347.

⁴⁴ O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, VI (Washington, D.C., 1960), 10 note 27, and 16 note 53.

That there was an ivory throne in Grado, connected with St. Mark, by the time the marble throne was in Venice is made clear by a passage in the *Commentarii Aquileienses* of Giovanni Candido, written prior to A.D. 1521, which reads: *Cathedram qua Alexandriae Marcus Evangelista praesederat vidimus in Sacrario Gradensi laceram ebore consortam*.⁴⁵ Apparently, when in the sixteenth century Grado was left with only one venerated bishop's cathedra, instead of the two mentioned in the earliest sources, the tradition of the city then connected that chair with St. Mark rather than with St. Hermagoras.

Moreover, it will be noticed that not one of the sources which mention a cathedra of ivory makes the slightest reference to its artistic decoration. The only epithet used in the Aquileian Acts is *politis*, added to *ex ebore tabulis*. The term admittedly has more than one meaning and could denote "polished," i.e., plain, in which case the throne may not have had any relief sculpture at all. We must realize that ivory cathedrae were by no means a rarity but rather a common commodity in the Early Christian period. We hear, for instance, that Cyril of Alexandria in the fifth century presented to the imperial court of Constantinople the most lavish gifts, including fourteen *cathedrae eburneae*.⁴⁶ It can hardly be assumed that all of them were as richly adorned with figurative ivories as was the Maximianus cathedra in Ravenna. Thus, the mere mention of an ivory cathedra does not necessarily justify associating with it a rich cycle of narrative plaques.

It then becomes clear that Graeven's theory connecting the ivory plaques with scenes from the life of St. Mark with an ivory throne in Grado receives little support from the literary sources, which at best are ambiguous, unspecific, and contradictory. If we can no longer rely upon Graeven's reconstruction as a guidepost, then the early date of the ivory group around A.D. 600 must be examined anew in light of the fact that there is no *terminus ante quem* which can be accepted with any degree of certainty.

B. THE STYLE AROUND A.D. 600

The first attempt to integrate our ivories into the Early Christian art of Egypt was made by Strzygowski who introduced as a parallel the Louvre ivory, which he himself had interpreted as St. Mark surrounded by his thirty-five successors as bishops of Alexandria (fig. 15).⁴⁷ This would date the ivory at the time of Anastasios, patriarch of Alexandria, who occupied the see of St. Mark from 607 to 609. While some scholars have questioned this identification, none has offered a better explanation, and an early seventh-century date and Alexandrian origin for the ivory have been generally accepted. Yet neither Strzygowski nor MacLagan⁴⁸ makes any detailed comparisons. If the Louvre ivory and the plaques in question were contemporary and produced in the same region, one would expect some

⁴⁵ Lib. III, fol. 12^v (quoted in Garrucci, *op. cit.*, 14).

⁴⁶ P. Battifol, *Études de liturgie et d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1919), 172. I owe the knowledge of this passage to the kindness of Carl Nordenfalk.

⁴⁷ *Orient oder Rom*, 71 ff. and figs. 30-31. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 71, no. 144, and pl. 46.

⁴⁸ "An Early Christian Ivory Relief" (*supra*, note 14), 192.

stylistic agreements; instead, what is immediately striking are their dissimilarities. In the Louvre relief the sculptor has represented Mark in spatial depth, giving to his body, under a softly clinging drapery, a sense of corporeality. In all these features the relief stands in a direct classical tradition which has not yet changed its essential values. The seated Mark of the London plaque (fig. 14) is very different: here the plastic values are mostly transformed into linear ones, and the lines take on a double function—modelling the body and assuming a graphic quality which aims at patternization. This holds true for the design of the garments as well as of the faces and the result is a somewhat dematerialized body, a quality strengthened by the suspension of the figure, whose feet seem to dangle above the footstool seen in bird's-eye view. To be sure, the London plaque is of no lesser quality than that in the Louvre; on the contrary, the linear design is delicate and well organized, but the style is definitely further removed from the classical tradition as the result of a conscious abstraction of the spatial concepts and the body's physical reality.

Can we be certain that the Louvre ivory is typical of the East Christian style around A.D. 600 in general, be it in Egypt or anywhere else within the Byzantine Empire? A focal point are the Cyprus plates whose hallmarks prove their Constantinopolitan origin during the years 613–629/30, within the reign of the Emperor Heraclius.⁴⁹ The frontally seated figure of Saul in the plate illustrating the presentation of the youthful David to the King by Jesse (fig. 16)⁵⁰ compares well with the figure of Mark on the Louvre ivory, thus giving greater weight to the dating of the latter to the early seventh century. Though produced in different but leading centers, they display a similar feeling of corporeality under softly clinging folds. To be sure, the Constantinopolitan silver plate is more refined and aristocratic, but the degree of understanding of the classical heritage is similar in both works and this makes it all the more impossible to consider the London ivory of St. Mark (fig. 14) a product of the same period.

In defending the early date of the St. Mark ivories Maclagan felt quite sure that he had made his point by comparing the St. Menas plaque (fig. 5) with a marble relief of the same subject in the Museum of Alexandria (fig. 17).⁵¹ This parallel, he states, "makes it almost impossible to doubt that they belong to the same period and school."⁵² Indeed, a close iconographic relationship cannot be denied, both monuments reflecting a famous cult image of the Menas sanctuary in the desert west of Alexandria. Stylistically, however, there is a wide gap. Although rough and of a lower quality than the ivory, the Menas figure of the marble relief stands at ease, showing clearly the distinction between the

⁴⁹ O. M. Dalton, in *Archaeologia*, 57 (1900), 159 ff., and *Burl. Mag.*, 10 (1906/7), 355 ff.; M. Rosenberg, *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, IV (Berlin-Leipzig, 1928), 636 ff., nos. 9647–9716; E. Cruikshank Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, VII (Washington, D.C., 1961), 178 ff., nos. 58–66 (with additional bibliography); A. and J. Stylianou, *The Treasures of Lambousa* (Nicosia, 1969) (in Greek), 17 ff.; K. Weitzmann, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Cyprus Plates," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 3 (1970), 97 ff.

⁵⁰ This plate is discussed in detail in Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, 106 ff. and fig. 10.

⁵¹ Kaufmann, *Menas-Ampullen*, 96 and fig. 35.; J. Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture 300–1300* (London, 1963), 9 and pl. 10; K. Wessel, *Koptische Kunst. Die Spätantike in Ägypten* (Recklinghausen, 1963), 18 and fig. 12.

⁵² "An Early Christian Ivory Relief," 187.

bearing and the free leg, and its garments with simplified parallel folds cling to its body revealing a fleshy corporeality. In contrast, the Menas of the ivory stands with his weight distributed evenly, and the garments, especially the tunic with its flat surface and few engraved folds, hide and thereby dematerialize the body. These differences are not those of quality but rather reflect a different reliance on the classical heritage, which is still strong in the one and to a large extent purposely abandoned in the other—differences which can only be explained by a considerable passage of time, the marble relief belonging, by general agreement, to the fifth century and the ivory, for the same reasons as the St. Mark plaque (fig. 14) previously discussed, to a period after Heraclius.

Goldschmidt in arguing an early date for the ivories placed special importance on the background architecture, and compared the walled city behind Christ in the Lazarus plaque (fig. 12) to the city of Jerusalem appearing behind Christ in the scene of the withered fig tree in a miniature of the Codex Sinopensis (fig. 19),⁵³ where the columnar rotunda with cupola flanked by two buildings with gabled fronts forms a complex comparable to that in the ivory. Yet, while the motifs are similar, the relationships between them are quite different. The wall in the miniature produces the spatial effect of an actual circular enclosure into which the buildings are set so that two structures rendered in perspective flank the rotunda. In the Lazarus ivory the sharp angle in the wall impairs seriously the illusion of perspective, the diagonal base of the otherwise frontal rotunda distorts and flattens it, and the pairs of towers, replacing the perspectively designed houses of the miniature, add to the impression of rigid two-dimensionality.

Strzygowski on his part saw certain similarities between the architectural backgrounds of the ivories and the complex architectural settings in the miniatures of the Ashburnham Pentateuch,⁵⁴ without however discussing them in detail. A typical miniature is that representing the city of Zoar from which Lot departs with his two daughters (fig. 20):⁵⁵ it shows a crowding of different types of buildings, most of them drawn with a strong sense of perspective, receding one behind the other on different planes into the background. Thus we meet here the same contrasts: a sense for space inherited from antiquity in the miniature, and its replacement by increasingly two-dimensional, linear values in the ivories. The Codex Sinopensis belongs to the second half of the sixth century and the Ashburnham has generally been dated in the seventh century, in the pre-Islamic period. These comparisons in my opinion provide evidence that the ivories are later than any work of art of the sixth century or around the year 600.

On the other hand, we find an abstraction comparable to that of the ivories and achieved by similar means in the architectural backgrounds of numerous miniatures of the *Sacra Parallela* in Paris, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 923, a manuscript of about the early ninth century which, if I am not mistaken, was produced in

⁵³ H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du VI^e au XIV^e siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1929), 3 and pl. B; A. Grabar, *Les peintures de l'Évangélaire de Sinope* (Paris, 1948), 14 and pl. v.; Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 3, 34, and fig. 32.

⁵⁴ *Orient oder Rom*, 74 and fig. 11.

⁵⁵ O. von Gebhardt, *The Miniatures of the Ashburnham Pentateuch* (London, 1883), 13 and pl. 6.

Palestine.⁵⁶ In the illustration of the Good Samaritan (fig. 21) the two cities of Jerusalem and Jericho still conform to the Hellenistic-Roman formula of the walled city, but are completely flattened—even more so than in the ivories. The wall between two towers in the city on the left is rendered as a steep diagonal, intending not to suggest foreshortening but to form a symmetrical pattern with the city at the right, comparable to that of the two cities in the ivory of the Baptism (fig. 9). The domed towers are piled together and squeezed in, and the corner tower of the city at the right terminates in a square seen in bird's-eye view, both features having close parallels in the Healing and Baptism scenes (figs. 8, 9). The lack of perspective, or rather the consistent projection of all architectural details in a two-dimensional plane, gives a strong artistic unity to the ivories. In one instance (fig. 9) the oblique tympanum—with central window—resting on two columns gives the impression of a lopsided gate. Most likely this is a two-dimensional projection of what was originally a baldachin or rotunda surmounted by a cupola. In the manuscript of the *Sacra Parallela* we find a very similar oblique tympanum in the miniature of the bathing Susanna (fig. 22) where the building, even more abstract, suggests a derivation from a domed bathhouse. In the development sketched here the ivories fall halfway between the Codex Sinopensis on the one hand and the *Sacra Parallela* on the other, being considerably further removed from the classical tradition than the former, but not yet as ornamentalized and abstract as the latter.

Yet, in one instance, the architectural motif of one of our ivories is indeed very close to that of a miniature from the second half of the sixth century. Goldschmidt observed that the sanctuary before which St. Menas stands in the Milan ivory (fig. 5) has “precisely the same topping” as the structure under which St. Mark writes his Gospel in the frontispiece miniature of the Rossano Gospels (fig. 18),⁵⁷ a manuscript produced by the same scriptorium, most likely Syrian, as the Codex Sinopensis. In both cases a central niche with a conch is flanked by two pyramidal structures. However, there are slight but significant differences. In the miniature the pyramids are three-dimensional, while in the ivory they are flat triangles. Here as elsewhere the transformation from a spatial to a two-dimensional rendering is manifest. Another detail is even more important: in the ivory the capitals which support the architrave are of a strange bottle-necked type, quite different from those in the Rossano miniature which, deformed as they are, can still be recognized as deriving from classical capitals.

Thus, our conclusion is that from the points of view of both figure style and architectural setting, a date around 600 can no longer be maintained for our ivory group, and that new and independent evidence refutes Graeven's theory that our plaques adorned an ivory chair given by the Emperor Heraclius to Grado.

⁵⁶ J. R. Harris, *Fragments of Philo Judaeus* (Cambridge, 1886); K. Weitzmann, *Die Byzantinische Buchmalerei des IX. und X. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1935), 80ff. and pl. 86 (here ascribed to Italy, but I now prefer to assume an origin in Palestine); *idem*, *Roll and Codex* (Princeton, 1947; 2nd ed., 1970), 115ff., 133ff., 150ff., and figs. 103, 114–15; *idem*, “Die Illustration der Septuaginta,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 3–4 (1952–53), 105ff. and figs. 8–9, 14, 16–17. A monographic treatment of this manuscript by the author is in preparation.

⁵⁷ A. Muñoz, *Il Codice Purpureo di Rossano* (Rome, 1907), 5 and pl. xv.; Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 3, 35, and fig. 33.

C. THE ISSUE OF THE ISLAMIC INFLUENCE

One of the chief arguments of some early writers against the early date was based on the notion that the ivories reflect Islamic influences. As we have said (p. 50), Toesca was the first to mention these influences in a very general way, without reference to a single detail or parallel, whereas Volbach (p. 50) elaborated somewhat on the topic and focussed on two specific points. The first is the bulbous dome as seen in the Baptism ivory (fig. 9). While it is certainly true that this does become a very characteristic feature of Islamic art, it will be noted that it occurs also in a miniature of the Codex Sinopensis (fig. 19) as well as in the Ashburnham Pentateuch (fig. 20), both considered pre-Islamic. The second point concerns the crenellations appearing in the Baptism ivory (fig. 9). Strzygowski had already directed attention to this motif in connection with the Louvre ivory of St. Mark (fig. 15)⁵⁸ and found a striking similarity not only in the step-like treatment of the crenellations, but also in their characteristic perforation, which is round in the Louvre ivory and niche-like in the Baptism plaque. The crenellations are of two types, rectangular as in the pre-Islamic Louvre ivory, and trapezoidal as in the St. Mark plaque. The latter type is characteristic of Umayyad art, and is found in the architectural decoration of Khirbat al Mafjar in the Jordan valley (fig. 23),⁵⁹ dated from the reign of the Caliph Hisham (724-743). However, this type occurs already on Sassanian royal crowns which are attributed to the sixth-seventh century,⁶⁰ while earlier crowns still have the rectangular crenellation.⁶¹

There are other details for which the most striking parallels are found in Umayyad art. The two columns supporting the architrave in the Annunciation ivory (fig. 1) are surmounted by capitals with helices which are reminiscent of the Corinthian capital; the shafts, on the other hand, are divided into tiers, each ornamented with motifs borrowed from capitals. Here an allover pattern replaces the classical form with its clear structural distinction between shaft and capital. We meet the same phenomenon on the colonnettes from the palace porch at Khirbat al Mafjar (text fig. A).⁶²

Nor are all the parallels with Islamic art limited to the field of architecture. In the fragment of the Cana Miracle (fig. 13) the six vessels have a very striking form with extremely narrow neck and small foot whereby the sinuous profile of the vase is the more emphasized. These shapes are quite different from those found in Early Christian ivories of the Cana Miracle, as, for instance, the fifth-century plaque in Berlin or the Milan bookcover of the same century, where the vessels are footless and pot-bellied.⁶³ Neither comparable are the tall *pithoi* so prominently displayed in the Cana scene of the



A.

⁵⁸ *Orient oder Rom*, 74 and fig. 31.

⁵⁹ R. W. Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar. An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley* (Oxford, 1959), pl. xx, 2.

⁶⁰ R. Ghirshman, *Persian Art. The Parthian and Sassanian Dynasties* (New York, 1962), fig. 259.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, figs. 252-54.

⁶² Hamilton, *op. cit.*, 22 and fig. 2.

⁶³ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, pl. 34, no. 112, and pl. 37, no. 119.

Maximianus cathedra.⁶⁴ However, the undulating, swelling outlines of the vessels in the Cana plaque are, indeed, comparable to those on reliefs from the palace of Mschatta (fig. 24),⁶⁵ to be dated, like Khirbat al Mafjar, around the middle of the eighth century, though here the form is that of a richly decorated amphora with two elegant handles. In smaller scale and with tiny handles on its shoulders, this type of vessel occurs once more in the Nativity plaque, where it stands upon a pedestal (fig. 2). This vase form, like most elements in early Islamic art, has classical roots, but the heavier form of the classical amphora has been transformed and given fluid outlines as the result of a new aesthetic principle.

Thus, our conclusion is that Volbach was basically right when he argued against a sixth-century date for our ivories on the basis of the impact of Islamic art forms. As far as I can see, however, all features that are related to Islamic art can already be found in monuments of the Umayyad period and for this reason one would not have to look later than the eighth century for the date of our ivories.

III. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE LATE DATE

In the previous chapter I have tried to demonstrate that there are three reasons why an early date for the so-called Grado Chair ivories cannot be maintained: (1) Graeven's documentary evidence for an early chair of St. Mark in Grado decorated with ivory plaques is, at best, inconclusive; (2) the style of the ivories finds no parallels anywhere in the period of the Emperor Heraclius but clearly shows elements further removed from the classical mainstream; and (3) the ivories contain certain features best explained by Islamic influences. Yet, not one of these reasons would justify going to the other extreme and dating the ivories in the eleventh or even twelfth century.

Apart from the Islamic parallels, the chief argument for the later date has been the closeness of three plaques with New Testament scenes to the corresponding plaques in the antependium of Salerno, whose date some scholars have related to the consecration of an altar in the cathedral of Salerno in the year 1084.⁶⁶ Although the connection with this consecration has not been generally admitted as conclusive, a date in the late eleventh century has been widely accepted, although the possibility of an early twelfth-century date has not been excluded.⁶⁷ There can be little doubt that the plaques with the Nativity (fig. 2), the Raising of Lazarus (fig. 12), and the Miracle of Cana (fig. 13) were indeed available to the artists of the antependium, but this in itself does not prove the two monuments to be approximately contemporary. There are many instances in which artists of the Middle Ages were attracted by works of art produced con-

⁶⁴ C. Cecchelli, *La cattedra di Massimiano* (Rome, 1936-44), pl. xxviii.

⁶⁵ K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I (Oxford, 1932), 370 and pl. 66.

⁶⁶ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 3ff., 36ff., no. 126, and pls. XLII-XLVIII.

⁶⁷ A. Carucci in a recent study (*Gli avori salernitani del sec. XII* [Salerno, 1965]), dates the antependium, as indicated in the title of his book, in the twelfth century.

siderably earlier. The iconography may be quite close in such cases, but stylistic differences will inevitably be apparent where a considerable period of time separates model and copy. The use of the so-called Cotton Genesis, a sixth-century Greek manuscript, by the thirteenth-century mosaicists of San Marco is a case in point.⁶⁸ Thus, to determine the possible time lapse between our ivories and those of the Salerno antependium requires a more detailed comparison than has hitherto been attempted.

In the Salerno plaque with the Raising of Lazarus (fig. 25)⁶⁹ the ivory carver, who usually allotted half of each narrow panel, i.e., roughly a square, to each scene, subdivided the lower register in such a way that slightly less than a quarter of the plaque was reserved for the Lazarus scene. This forced him to reduce the standing figures to about three-quarter height and to raise the kneeling women above what must have been the groundline in the model. But even if one reconstructs the model with full-length figures, it would be wider than high whereas the Lazarus plaque in the British Museum (fig. 12)—like most of the ivories of our group—is higher than wide. This considerable difference of format created a basic difficulty for the copyist. From the Lazarus plaque of our group he copied the figure of Christ who holds in His left hand a long scepter, a most unusual variant of what in Early Christian art is normally a cross-staff. This attribute is a very significant detail supporting the direct dependence of the Salerno plaque on ours. Also copied from it were the single accompanying disciple with a pointed beard, and on the opposite side in an arcaded tomb the body of Lazarus heavily wrapped in a mummy cloth, which the copyist no longer understood. On the other hand, while in our plaque the two sisters fill the remaining space very tightly, the one standing and the other crouching at her feet, the Salerno carver had a wider space to fill, and for this he resorted to another model, from which he borrowed the two kneeling sisters and the servant holding his nose against the stench of Lazarus who "hath been dead four days" (John 11:39). These figures were traditional in representations of the Raising of Lazarus, as witnessed by the miniature in the Rossano Gospels (fig. 26),⁷⁰ where likewise we see the two sisters kneeling in profile, and beside the mummy the servant who, however, is slightly different in that he holds the mummy with one hand while pointing at it with the other, thus having no hand free for holding his nose, which is covered by the raised tunic. Furthermore, Lazarus here stands before the entrance of a cave, not of a building. There is no need to assume a model as early as the Rossano miniature for the Salerno carver: a much closer iconographic parallel can be found in a tenth-century ivory plaque in Berlin (fig. 27).⁷¹ Here we see the servant in very much the same pose as in the Salerno ivory—although he holds his nose with his naked hand, not with his

⁶⁸ J. J. Tikkanen, "Die Genesismosaiken von S. Marco in Venedig und ihr Verhältnis zu den Miniaturen der Cottonbibel," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae*, 17 (Helsingfors, 1889), 99 ff.; K. Weitzmann, "Observations on the Cotton Genesis Fragments," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), 112 ff.

⁶⁹ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 39, and pl. XLVI, no. 126,35.; A. Carucci, *op. cit.*, 122 and fig. 28.

⁷⁰ Muñoz, *op. cit.*, 13 and pl. I.

⁷¹ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, 28, no. 14, and pl. IV.

long sleeve—and his bent left arm suggests that, as in the Salerno plaque, he was meant to hold the end of the mummy cloth which he is about to unravel. Obviously, the artist of our plaque could not use the central section of the traditional iconography, as depicted in the Rossano miniature and in the Berlin plaque, because of lack of space, and therefore adapted from other scenes available to him two female figures which would fit the narrow area between Christ and Lazarus. The standing sister, as has been observed by several scholars, is actually the Virgin of the Annunciation plaque in Milan (fig. 1) whose gestures have meaning in the confrontation with the approaching Gabriel, but are not quite appropriate for the supplicating sister of Lazarus. The crouching sister may have been taken from a representation of Christ Healing the Woman with the Issue of Blood, in which she is rendered on one knee and stretching out her hands to touch the seam of Christ's mantle. One of the lateral scenes on a sixth-century ivory bookcover in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and one of the four ivory plaques with miracle scenes in the Collection of Meyer van den Bergh in Antwerp, dated by Volbach, perhaps a little too late, in the ninth-tenth century, may be mentioned as parallels.⁷² Therefore one must assume that there were available to the Salerno artist two models, which he tried to combine—one the London plaque of our group, the other a Byzantine ivory of the tenth century, although, as we shall see later (p. 52), the latter could not have been of the "painterly" group to which the Berlin plaque belongs.

In the Salerno scene of the Miracle of Cana (fig. 28)⁷³ the same two sources must be assumed, although they cannot be demonstrated as clearly as in the preceding case because of the fragmentary state of our plaque (Victoria and Albert Museum, London; fig. 13). In the two ivories the three servants, the first filling vessel from a waterskin, the second carrying a smaller wine amphora on his shoulder, and the third offering a cup to a figure above, agree iconographically so well that one can only subscribe to the opinion common to all scholars that the one is copied directly from the other. Yet, aside from the stylistic differences to be discussed later, there are a few minor details indicating that the Salerno carver no longer understood certain features of the model. The clavi, which are still very clearly understood as such on the tunics of two of the servants on the London fragment, have lost their identity as embroidered bands in the Salerno ivory. Moreover, in the London plaque the tunic of the servant at the right is decorated differently, with an embroidered yoke and wide band down the chest. This type of band occurs, even more splendidly decorated, on the tunic of the foremost listener in the scene of St. Mark Preaching (fig. 7) and finds a parallel in the tunic of Longinus in the Crucifixion fresco of S. Maria Antiqua in Rome (fig. 32),⁷⁴ executed in the mid-eighth century under Pope Zacharias I. The Salerno copyist, unfamiliar with such tunic decoration, has turned the central band

⁷² Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 71, no. 145, and pl. 47; 100, no. 234, and pl. 64.

⁷³ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 39, and pl. XLV, no. 126,30.

⁷⁴ W. de Grüneisen, *Sainte-Marie-Antique* (Rome, 1911), 120 and pl. IC. XXXIX.; J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, 1916), II, 679; IV, pl. 163.

into a single clavus. A still more serious mistake occurs in the copying of the attribute of the servant in the center. In the London plaque this is a tall wine lifter made of glass, of a type which has been found in Egypt from the Roman and post-Roman periods (text fig. B).⁷⁵ Such a vessel, still well understood, in another fresco of S. Maria Antiqua of about the middle of the eighth century is held by the butler who offers a cup to Pharaoh (fig. 29).⁷⁶ The carver of the Salerno plaque clearly had no understanding of the original function of this Egyptian vessel and turned it into a staff. Now, it will be noticed that the London plaque is very narrow—it is broken only at the top, not at the sides. The missing upper half could not possibly have contained the extensive group represented in the Salerno plaque. All that can reasonably be expected are standing figures—which are the rule in Early Christian representations of this miracle. In the Rabula Gospels, for instance, where the scene is divided and distributed left and right of the Canon table (fig. 31 a–b),⁷⁷ the standing Christ and Virgin face two servants, one pouring from a skin and the other carrying a small wine jar upon his shoulder, precisely as in the ivories, thus ensuring that we are dealing with the same iconographical tradition. Even where lack of space was not a problem, as in the fifth-century ivory cover in Milan,⁷⁸ Christ stands in the midst of a crowd of wedding guests. The Salerno artist must then have had at his disposal another model for the broad composition of the upper half of his scene; here he shows Christ reclining Roman style as if on a kline and talking with His mother, three guests seated at the table, and in a strange pose with one leg tucked under him, occupying the place opposite Christ, a crowned old man, “the governor of the feast” (John 11:8); in the lower half the artist simply spread out the six pot-bellied vessels in a row instead of placing some behind others. In this instance also, as in the Lazarus plaque, the Salerno carver must have used a second model, which again may have been a tenth-century ivory. Since none has survived with a representation of the Cana Miracle, an eleventh-century miniature will be introduced instead for comparison. In the richly illustrated Gospel book of the Laurentian Library, cod. Plut. VI.23 (fig. 30),⁷⁹ we find a grouping very similar indeed to that of the Salerno plaque: Christ lies at the left on a kline, talking with His mother, three guests sit behind an oval-shaped table, and the governor is at the right in a pose similar to that of Christ. This governor figure in the miniature looks much more convincing and seems better to reflect the archetype, whereas the strange figure in the ivory may well have been an invention of the Salerno carver, who, even in the comparatively large space available to him, could not have accommodated a governor



B.

⁷⁵ C. C. Edgar, *Graeco-Egyptian Glass. Catalogue général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* (Cairo, 1905), 80, nos. 32773 and 32774 on pl. xi.

⁷⁶ Wilpert, *op. cit.*, II, 707; IV, pl. 193.; Grüneisen, *op. cit.*, 108 and pl. 1c. xxiv.

⁷⁷ C. Cecchelli, G. Furlani, M. Salmi, *The Rabula Gospels* (Olten-Lausanne, 1959), 56 and pl. fol. 5a.

⁷⁸ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 61, no. 119, and pl. 37.

⁷⁹ On this manuscript in general, cf. G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile* (Paris, 1916), pp. and figs. cf. index, p. 739. T. Velmans, *Le Tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* (Paris, 1971), 58 and fig. 271.

lying on a kline. On the other hand, the miniaturist too was faced with a formal problem: being restricted in height rather than width, he was forced to place the servants on the same level as the banquet table instead of below it, thereby sacrificing the motif of the offering of the cup to Christ.

In the third New Testament scene, the Nativity (fig. 33),⁸⁰ the Salerno carver faced a different task. In this case his model (fig. 2) was wider than it was high, readily supplying him with all details so that he had no need to resort to a second source; but as a consequence of the difference in proportions, he was forced to squeeze the frieze-like model into an approximate square. This adjustment, which he could not quite master, led to many awkward features that make this scene one of the least successful of the whole antependium. In the Dumbarton Oaks plaque the mattress on which the Virgin lies, though seen in bird's-eye view, partly touches the ground and partly is supported by three wooden legs in such a way that the Virgin appears to lie comfortably without offending the laws of gravity. In the Salerno plaque the mattress is raised and supported in the center by five turned legs, which give the effect of a precarious suspension. The manger, which in the earlier plaque appears to stand on the ground behind the Virgin, looks likewise suspended in the Salerno plaque and the ox, instead of approaching from the left, is reduced to a head which almost looks as if it were disembodied and lying on the manger. Of the three figures, the most awkwardly designed is that of Salome; in the early plaque she sits on the ground in a very stately pose, touching her chin in a pensive gesture, while in the Salerno ivory she almost topples forward and holds her chin as if she had a toothache. There is no need to describe in greater detail the many differences between the two plaques since it is too obvious that, in spite of their direct iconographical relationship, they are far apart in style.

Not all the differences, however, can be ascribed simply to variations in quality, which would make the Salerno ivories look like a corruption of the style of the earlier group. Certain features in the Salerno ivories reveal the impact of their second source—Byzantine ivories of the tenth century, i.e., of the period of the Macedonian Renaissance. There is one very conspicuous detail, the treatment of Christ's nimbus, which permits definition of the Byzantine source with great precision. While it is undecorated in our St. Mark group, in all ivories of the Salerno group it has a very characteristic design: both the edge of the nimbus and the axes of its cross are adorned with strings of pearls. The ornament of nimbi is one of the main criteria by which the various ateliers working side by side in the capital in the tenth century can be distinguished. The aristocratic Romanos Group, to which the Deesis on a bookcover in the University Library of Würzburg belongs (fig. 34),⁸¹ decorates the nimbus of Christ with strings of pearls at its circumference and at the edges of the crossbars, while the Nikephoros Group, of which the Louvre plaque with the Mission of the Apostles is a typical representative (fig. 36),⁸² decorates only the center of the crossbars in

⁸⁰ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, IV, 39 and pl. XLV, no. 126,28; Carucci *op. cit.*, 88 and fig. 22.

⁸¹ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, 42, no. 56, and pl. XXIII.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 55, no. 100, and pl. XXXVIII.

this fashion. In the Salerno antependium (figs. 25, 28) we obviously find a combination of the two—a combination which, however, was not made in this Italian workshop for the first time, but occurs occasionally on a third Byzantine ivory group, contemporary with the others. This so-called Triptych Group, of which the plaque with the Koimesis in the Musée de Cluny in Paris is a characteristic example (fig. 35),⁸³ draws inspiration in other respects also from both the Romanos and the Nikephoros Groups.

Indeed, ivories of the Triptych Group are second only to those of our group in the importance of their influence on the Salerno ivories, and not only with respect to the form of the nimbus. The Triptych Group which, it must be stated, reached quite often a higher artistic level than that of the Koimesis plaque mentioned above, was the outgrowth of an atelier which mass-produced works destined chiefly for export, like the Limoges enamels of thirteenth-century France. Instead of the sharp and clearly defined folds which characterize the Romanos and the Nikephoros Groups and lend their creations a feeling of great dignity and aristocratic refinement, the drapery in the Triptych Group is treated more sketchily in short lines, straight and curved, which have a decorative quality but hardly assist in the modelling of the figures. This same quality we also find in many ivories of the Salerno antependium. The close relationship extends to the treatment of the heads. Whereas the double line indicating the eyelids and the fixed pupil in the eyes of our ivories give the effect of a stare, in the Salerno ivories only the upper lid is depicted as a double line, and the pupil seems to move freely, thus giving to the figures a much more animated look and the impression that they have a perception of the outside world. Moreover, whereas our ivories represent the hair with either straight parallel lines or spiral locks, in the Salerno Nativity the hair and beard of Joseph show an undulation which enlivens the expression of the face and makes it appear more natural. In all these details the Salerno ivories agree so closely with those not only of the Triptych Group but also of the other Byzantine groups, that there can be little doubt that, stylistically, Byzantine ivories were their chief source of inspiration. Despite a certain clumsiness of figure design in the Salerno ivories as compared with those of our group, their greater spontaneity in facial expression is owed to Byzantine models. To notice in South Italian ivories a strong dependence upon Byzantine models can hardly be surprising in view of the strong influence the Eastern capital exerted after she had, at the time of the Macedonian Renaissance, regained her position as the arbiter in all matters of artistic creation. No one disputes how strong this influence became, particularly in eleventh-century Montecassino. What interests us here—and this point cannot be emphasized too strongly—is the fact that our ivories, in contrast to those of the Salerno group, are absolutely free of any influence of the Macedonian Renaissance, an influence which no country with high artistic ambitions could entirely escape. Thus, I believe that they must date before the tenth century. How much earlier than this century they might be will have to be determined by other lines of investigation.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 70, no. 174, and pl. LIX.

IV. THE GROUPING OF THE IVORIES

The abandoning of Graeven's theory of the Grado chair not only required a re-examination of the date of our ivories, but has two further consequences. If the ivories did not decorate the so-called St. Mark's Cathedra of Grado, then there is no reason to connect them with any cathedra and one will have to ask what other objects they could possibly have adorned. Moreover—and this is of even greater importance—if no such cathedra existed, then there is no need to relate our ivories to any one single object. In order to support the idea of a cathedra the unity of the plaques was argued not so much from the stylistic point of view—where on occasion an element of uneasiness appeared in the judgment of some scholars—but from a technical point of view. It is indeed surprising that the majority of the plaques are of a standard size, with insignificant deviations, measuring between 19.4 cm. and 19.8 cm. in height and 8.6 cm. and 9.6 cm. in width, with one plaque (fig. 7) proving an exception (10.8 cm. in width). Even the plaque in Washington (fig. 2) fits these measurements, although in reverse, being 9.5 cm. high and 19.3 cm. wide. One plaque (fig. 14) with a height of only 13.2 cm. has been cut at the top and originally may well have been as tall as the others. Each of the set of four smaller plaques (figs. 3–6) measures 10–10.1 cm. \times 8.5 cm., i.e., almost exactly half the height of the larger plaques. This is indeed a strange phenomenon when considered from the point of view of Western Mediaeval ivories, most of which are bookcovers. Since books themselves vary greatly in size and, in addition, areas of different dimensions for the ivory are allotted in the center of the cover, the variations are very great. There is no reason to assume that our ivories once decorated bookcovers, for which their subject matter—with the possible exception of the Peter and Mark plaque (fig. 14)—is not appropriate. There are objects, however, which lend themselves more naturally to decoration with ivories of standard sizes, like, for instance, the figured plaques in the many rosette caskets made in Constantinople.⁸⁴ One must, therefore, leave open the possibility that the ivories of our group were likewise made for a kind of object which lends itself to the insertion of plaques of standardized sizes. I shall discuss the problem of the purpose of our ivories later, in connection with their place of origin, since obviously local tradition will have to be taken into consideration in answering this question.

Furthermore, if our plaques were not associated with a single object, there is also no longer the prerequisite that they must have been made within a few years of each other. There must be raised the question of how great the stylistic differences are within the group—whether they can be ascribed to different levels of quality, due to variations in the competence of the carvers, or whether these differences in style are of a more fundamental nature, requiring for their development one or more generations.

⁸⁴ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, I: *Kästen*.

A. THE EARLIER GROUP

Since obviously we are dealing with objects of the transitional period from the latest phase of the Early Christian to the crystallization of the Mediaeval, it follows that those ivories in which the classical forms are still comparatively well understood must be the earliest, while those which introduce more abstract forms are later. Of course there have existed times of conscious revivals, when the trend moved in the opposite direction, but as a whole our ivories do not show the character of an art which tried intentionally to recapture the style of a bygone period, and they cannot be related to any of the known renaissance movements, like the Carolingian in the West or the Macedonian in the East. Rather, they seem to reflect a period where artists were turning away from the classical tradition and striving toward a new style with a quality of its own. If my premises are correct, the earliest and by far most refined piece is the Annunciation (fig. 1), which has a distinction of its own. Most scholars who have proposed a late date for our ivories have been hesitant to apply it to this particular plaque. Volbach⁸⁵ emphasizes that its style varies too greatly from that of the plaques with the life of St. Mark to belong with them, although he accepts the eleventh-century date with the qualifying phrase "aber wohl schon 11. Jahrhundert." Bovini,⁸⁶ confident of the eleventh-century date for all the plaques, applies to the Annunciation a question mark.

Morey⁸⁷ has clearly isolated this plaque from the others, attributing it to "as late at least as the 7th century," and recognized—in my opinion, correctly—a close relationship between it and the well-known Archangel Michael in the British Museum. This angel plaque (fig. 37), which Volbach dates in the fifth century,⁸⁸ has been ascribed by Vasiliev, on historical, numismatic, and artistic grounds, to the reign of Justin I (518–527),⁸⁹ and this date, as well as the attribution to a Constantinopolitan workshop, has been accepted by most recent scholarship.⁹⁰ The folds of the angel's garments—most obviously over the right leg—rise above the surface in such plasticity that in places they look almost like strands of a very soft fabric attached to, rather than a part of, the garment. The drapery still gives the illusion of pressing against the body with a wind-blown effect in a fashion which had begun more or less with the Nike of Paionios. Yet, in spite of the strong classical character, the fold-lines begin to assume a greater regularity and with it a decorative and more linear quality which

⁸⁵ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 105, no. 251.

⁸⁶ Bovini and Ottolenghi, *Mostra degli avori* (*supra*, note 31), 120, no. 121.

⁸⁷ C. R. Morey, *Early Christian Art*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1953), 90, and fig. 82. However, his comparisons with the "contemporary similar awkward drawing in the Rotulus of Joshua" and "the miniatures of the Paris Psalter" are based on the mistaken notion of a date around 700 for these two manuscripts.

⁸⁸ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 57, no. 109, and pl. 32; Dalton, *Ivory Carvings* (*supra*, note 13), 9, no. 11, and pl. vi.

⁸⁹ A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First, An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 418ff., Excursus: "The Archangel Ivory in the British Museum and the Coins of Justin the First."

⁹⁰ J. Beckwith, *The Art of Constantinople* (London, 1961), 32 and fig. 41.

is the first step in a process of abstraction. The Virgin of the Annunciation (fig. 1) shows the very same treatment of the folds, in the paenula more marked than in the tunic, but the fold strands have begun to harden, emphasizing even more strongly the seeming separation of fold and drapery proper. Here the process of linearization has taken on some mannerisms of which the angel is still free, and which appears also in other aspects, like the capriciousness of the Virgin's pose and the affectation in the spreading of her over-elongated fingers. All this is more accentuated in the figure of the Virgin than in the angel, whose drapery is less stylized. The implication is that a sixth-century Constantinopolitan masterpiece in the style of the Michael plaque was used as a direct model and copied with clear understanding, not immediately thereafter but in a period sufficiently removed to account for the new features, which can hardly be explained as a degeneration of the classical tradition, but rather as its transformation into a style with its own decorative, and thus more abstract, characteristics. This abstraction is also evident in the faces with staring eyes, if they are compared with the human expression of the Archangel Michael. The trend toward abstraction is even stronger in the architectural background, where the feeling for structural coherence and perspective has been replaced by purely decorative principles. The columns, whose decorative qualities are related to Umayyad architecture (cf. p. 57), do not support the gable at its corners but are arranged so as to frame the Virgin's head. One need not go into further detail to demonstrate a considerable time lapse between the arch of the Michael plaque, where the classical tradition is still alive in every detail of the ornament, and the temple façade of the Annunciation, where new decorative principles and a new repertory of ornamental details prevail. Perhaps the greatest distortion, if I may use the word, is found in the throne of the Virgin, a simple wooden framework with no clear indication of the level of the seat and a rounded back like that of a wicker chair, its top inorganically squeezed behind the right column. The model of the Annunciation plaque seems, as we have said before, to have been Constantinopolitan, but whether the plaque itself, which in several aspects had left the classical tradition so far behind, was also made in the capital still presents a problem.

Within our group the ivory comparatively closest in style to the Annunciation plaque is the Nativity, now in Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 2). Here, in spite of the rubbed condition of the surface, one can still perceive that the drapery of the Virgin with its softly modelling folds, which at the same time consolidate in strands—especially across and below the breast of the Virgin—is indeed quite similar. As a whole, the Virgin of the Nativity is more corporeal and less mannered. The figure of Salome crouching in the corner is massive, her pose conveying an almost cubic three-dimensionality, and her meditative gesture is very convincing. From these points of view the Nativity looks almost more classical than the Annunciation plaque. On the other hand, the *horror vacui* of the background, in which are lined up typical cupola-crowned buildings and other structures, indicates that the concept of a unified background has been abandoned, and with it the classical tradition. The altar-like manger with its niche, which

apparently reflects the *locus sanctus* of Bethlehem from the Early Christian period, is a typical Palestinian feature, which appears for the first time on the lid of a reliquary in the Sancta Sanctorum treasure in Rome,⁹¹ a work of the seventh century. This may be the key which explains the similarities and dissimilarities within the same group: in style and technique the Annunciation and the Nativity belong to a common workshop, but their different background types point to different sources—the Annunciation plaque to a Constantinopolitan model and the Nativity to some work of another East Christian center. Yet, in spite of the two different traditions they reflect, the possibility that the two ivories might once have belonged to the same object cannot be excluded.

It should not be overlooked that a similar tendency toward overcrowding in the background had also developed in Egyptian ivories, as manifested in that group of high-relief panels decorating the pulpit of Henry II in the cathedral of Aachen, ivories which have generally been dated, in my opinion correctly, in the second half of the sixth century,⁹² and which Strzygowski and others had already related to our ivories. Certain features are comparable: the figure of Isis (fig. 38)⁹³ shows a drapery with strand-like folds between and below the breasts similar to those of the figure of the Virgin in our Nativity; some folds over the thigh tend to become linearized as do those of the Virgin of the Annunciation. There are small decorative details like the circle pattern on the groundline on which Isis stands, which may be compared with the pattern of the mattress on which the Virgin of the Nativity lies. The modios on Isis' head has a grill pattern similar to that of the altar table behind Joseph. Certain motifs within our group can be traced back to other ivories of the Aachen group. The foremost listener in the Preaching scene (fig. 7), for example, wears net-like leggings which parallel those worn by the standing soldier in Aachen.⁹⁴ Most striking of all, we find in the Aachen reliefs a *horror vacui* even more exaggerated than in our ivories. Yet all these details are not sufficient to prove our group a continuation of the style of the Aachen ivories, which surely are Egyptian. The circle and grill patterns, as well as the *horror vacui*, are too general to establish a place of origin. The architectural and other decorative motifs are quite different. Moreover, the Aachen ivories are carved in much higher relief, thereby conveying a stronger impression of physical reality, which suggests that they date prior to our Annunciation and Nativity plaques. At the same time, the figures in our plaques are more gracious and agile, even to the point of being mannered. What the two groups do have in common is that both are removed from the purer classical style of the capital as manifested in the Michael plaque in London, but each of

⁹¹ C. R. Morey "The Painted Panel from the Sancta Sanctorum," *Festschrift zum sechzigsten Geburtstag von Paul Clemen* (Düsseldorf, 1926), 156. K. Weitzmann, "Some Remarks on the Sources of the Fresco Paintings of the Cathedral of Faras," *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit* (Recklinghausen, 1970), 331 and fig. 329.

⁹² J. Strzygowski, "Die Elfenbeinreliefs der Kanzel des Domes zu Aachen," *Hellenistische und Koptische Kunst in Alexandria* (Vienna, 1902), 17ff.; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 45ff., nos. 72–77, and pls. 24–25.

⁹³ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 72 and pl. 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 76 and pl. 25.

them has followed a different route in transforming the classical style into a local mode of expression.

To the early phase of our group belong also, in my opinion, the four plaques with the prophets (figs. 3 and 4) and the saints (figs. 5 and 6). The two prophets are executed in techniques which differ greatly, a fact which has led several scholars to assume that the rougher one (fig. 3) was a later substitute. But Goldschmidt—as I believe, correctly—insisted that the two plaques are contemporary and that they belonged to the same object. There may be two reasons for the differences: (1) the unidentified prophet was made by a less accomplished and at the same time less mannered (i.e., more traditional) carver, and (2) the plaque is unfinished, with the folds only sketched, as in a preliminary drawing, and the open scroll lacking the writing of the verse which would have established the identity of the prophet. It is primarily on the basis of the easy flow of the folds of Joel's garments (fig. 4), whose lines have not yet hardened as have those which we shall observe in the Later Group (figs. 7–14), that I have closely associated this set of four plaques of equal size with the Annunciation and Nativity plaques, though I do not believe it likely that they belonged to the same object.

There is one feature peculiar to the tunics of both prophets, although in that of Joel it is more strongly pronounced: the folds billow in such a way that they end in a series of bell shapes. As early as the sixth century, to mention only the flying angels of the Barberini diptych as one of many examples,⁹⁵ such fold endings are executed in a still more organic manner, resembling trumpets rather than bells. For the more mannered rendering of this motif in the Joel plaque a parallel may be seen in the tunic of John under the cross in a Sinai icon (fig. 42), which I believe to be a Palestinian product of the eighth century;⁹⁶ here the fluttering folds occur in the garments of a figure which is not even in motion.

Most striking in the figures of the two prophets are their poses of extreme agitation, the one almost running and the other pirouetting as in a dance. This is in striking contrast to the dignified poses normally assumed by the prophets in the Byzantine tradition proper, for instance, the set of the minor prophets in the Cosmas Indicopleustes manuscript in the Vatican, cod. gr. 699, a work of the ninth century made in Constantinople.⁹⁷ However, a tradition of the agitated prophet seems to have existed in Syrian manuscripts, as may be seen in the miniatures of the so-called Buchanan Bible in the University of Cambridge, cod. OoI.Oo2, a Jacobite manuscript from the end of the twelfth century.⁹⁸ To be sure, the poses are not the same, but they are comparable in the degree of exaltation in the figure of Joel (fig. 39) as well as that of Jonah (fig. 40), who

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 48 and pl. 12.

⁹⁶ G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinaï*, I: *Planches*, 25; II: *Texte*, 39ff.; K. Weitzmann (with M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev, S. Radojčić), *Frühe Ikonen* (Vienna–Munich, 1965), pp. xi, lxxix, and pls. 6–7.

⁹⁷ C. Stornajolo, *Le miniature della Topografia cristiana di Cosma Indicopleuste (Codice vaticano greco 699)*, *Codices e Vaticanis selecti*, X (Milan, 1908), pls. 28–36 (fols. 67r–71r).

⁹⁸ J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1964), 241ff. and pls. 61, 3–64.

are rendered in the frenzy of experiencing divine visions.⁹⁹ As might be expected from a Syrian manuscript of the twelfth century, the style of the drapery is thoroughly under the influence of Middle Byzantine painting, which by that time had infiltrated all East Christian countries. One other small detail links the miniatures with an older tradition and with our ivories: the open scroll in the hand of Jonah (fig. 40) rolls at the bottom into a volute placed exactly in the center, while normally only one bottom corner is slightly rolled up. This and the whole shape of the scroll correspond precisely to those in the ivories.

Substantiation of our thesis that the miniatures of the Buchanan Bible indeed reflect an older Syrian tradition may be found by comparing the unidentified prophet (fig. 3) with Moses before Pharaoh in a miniature of a Syriac Bible in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. syr. 341, which has variously been dated between the sixth and eighth centuries (fig. 41).¹⁰⁰ The energetic forward-stepping attitude of Moses approaching Pharaoh is indeed quite similar and, in conformity with the Syrian artist's love for vehement gestures, Pharaoh responds to Moses' demands with an equally vivid pose. As a detail, one may notice that Moses' mantle shows the same billowing folds, although not quite as patternized, as those of the Joel figure in the ivory and of John in the Sinai icon (fig. 42).

At first glance it may seem surprising that the ivories with St. Menas (fig. 5) and another saint in the pose of an orant (fig. 6) might belong to the same set as the two prophets, because the saints are represented in poses of utmost calm and are motionless. This difference, however, should be explained not on chronological or artistic, but on generic grounds. The importance of such generic differences can nowhere be better illustrated than in the Vatican menologion, cod. gr. 1613, where once more all the prophets are represented in vivid attitudes and lively gestures in contrast to the saints, martyrs, and church fathers depicted hundreds of times in somewhat rigid frontal poses,¹⁰¹ like the two orant saints in our ivories. When one compares the head of Joel with that of Menas, the impression is that both were executed by the same artist. The eyes with the incised short brows close to the temple, the stylized row of spiral locks, the small mouths are very much alike, and so is the drapery in those elements which can be compared. The soft, thick folds of the chlamys of Menas, as much as can be seen of it over his left shoulder, have the same easy flow as those of Joel's mantle and, while Menas' tunic is very smooth and almost without folds, it shows great suppleness where it is tucked up over the girdle. Another feature which unifies the four ivory plaques is the architectural background: the buildings rise from the groundline on which the figures stand and the individual buildings, despite their stylization, still have a higher degree of structural reality than do those of the ivories of the Later Group (figs. 7-14).

⁹⁹ Jeremiah (= fol. 146v), Ezekiel (= fol. 163v), Hosea (= fol. 174r), Haggai (= fol. 180v), Jesus Sirach (= fol. 200r) are further examples of extremely vivid gestures and agitated poses: Leroy, *op. cit.*, pl. 62,3 and 4 (Hosea and Ezekiel). The rest are unpublished.

¹⁰⁰ H. Omont, "Peintures de l'Ancien Testament dans un manuscrit syriaque du VII^e ou VIII^e siècle," *Monuments Piot*, 17 (1909), 85ff. and pls. v-ix; Leroy, *op. cit.*, 208ff. and pls. 43-48.

¹⁰¹ K. Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1970), 199ff. and pls. LV-LVI.

B. THE LATER GROUP

The Later Group centers around the five plaques with scenes from the life of St. Mark (figs. 7–11). The drapery, especially that of St. Mark, is, in comparison to that of the Earlier Group, more simplified and linear and the folds serve progressively less and less to model the bodies. Coincident with the development of this more graphic handling of the folds is a decrease in corporeality, as manifested in flatter surfaces and, in some cases, in insecure stances. Similar differences can be observed in the background architecture. Whereas in the Nativity and the prophet plaques (figs. 2–4) the buildings have maintained a spatial relationship, the rigid grouping of the buildings in the Healing and Baptism plaques (figs. 8 and 9) is due not so much to the difference in format, which did not permit the buildings to rise from ground level, as to a more rigid application of symmetry and geometric features which lead to a decreasing structural clarity as well as to a concomitant dematerialization of the human body.

Aside from these general differences between the St. Mark series and the earlier ivories, there are considerable divergencies within the five plaques which illustrate the life of St. Mark, and there is less homogeneity among them than, for instance, among the four plaques with the prophets and the saints—apart from the fact that one of the latter plaques (fig. 3) seems unfinished. The differences can best be analyzed by concentrating on the figure of the Apostle himself. In the Preaching scene (fig. 7) the folds of the tunic and mantle are reduced to a few, which seem natural and appear to follow the laws of gravity. In the Healing scene (fig. 8) the parallel fold-lines over the left shoulder have begun to take on a rhythm of their own and cascade to the belt-like edge of the mantle at a point where two curved folds seem almost to splash: the curve of the mantle's bottom edge is also unrealistic. Different too is the treatment of the garments in the Baptism (fig. 9), where the folds over the Apostle's left arm begin to form a definite pattern of thrice-repeated, equidistant double folds. The free-hanging end of the mantle defies the law of gravity and has a dynamic character such as will be found again in Palaeologan art—a feature which reduces the material quality of the textile. In the fourth plaque, with the Ordination scene (fig. 10), the double-line folds have developed an almost mannered system whereby those over the sleeve of the tunic and over the thigh become more and more independent of the natural fall of the drapery. The fifth figure of the fragmentary plaque (fig. 11) stands in its degree of drapery stylization somewhere between the third and fourth plaques but has certain features, such as the angular folds over the breast, which agree with neither.

The differences between the four main plaques indicate a progression from a comparatively naturalistic drapery to one in which abstract linear design makes decisive inroads, though obviously not yet attaining its full potential. A similar development may also be discerned with regard to the corporeality of the figure. While in the first plaque (fig. 7) St. Mark stands firmly balanced on the ground, in the second (fig. 8) he stands above some architecture in the foreground, whereby an impression of suspension is effected. In the third (fig. 9)

there is added to this suspension a striding movement hardly motivated by the context. In the fourth (fig. 10) the Apostle's body seems to sway, giving insecurity to his stance, and in the fifth (fig. 11) the turning of the body into frontal view is poorly coordinated with the striding pose, and creates the effect of distortion.

In the architecture also a progressively greater abstraction can be observed. Whereas in the first plaque (fig. 7) the capitals and the profiles of the arch still show a fair knowledge of classical forms, in the fourth plaque (fig. 10) a more stylized capital and an abstractly patterned arch have taken their place. In the city prospects one senses that the somewhat casual arrangement of the buildings in the second plaque (fig. 8) has given way to a rigid, symmetrical arrangement in the third (fig. 9).

We must then ask whether the considerable changes within these plaques, which, since they belong to the same set, must have been produced within a short period of time, are due to the artistic development of a single artist, or reflect different hands. While either alternative is difficult to prove, it is my feeling that we are indeed dealing with several hands, for it seems unlikely that a single artist could have changed his "handwriting" so fundamentally with each plaque. More plausibly, there were different carvers within a large workshop, those of the first two plaques still working in a more traditional manner and those of the remaining three developing a more abstract and progressive style.

However, it seems highly unlikely that a workshop would have engaged several artists for the production of a single plaque each, since normally a large staff of carvers was employed only on larger commissions. I believe, therefore, that we are dealing here with only a few remnants of a larger set of plaques which once illustrated extensively the life of St. Mark, recording many episodes of the vicissitudinous travels of that missionary Apostle. Maclagan suggested that the set may have had as many as thirty panels, and this seems to me by no means excessive.¹⁰² How a workshop proceeded to handle a large commission can be inferred from the miniatures of the well-known Menologion in the Vatican Library, cod. gr. 1613, where each of the more than four hundred pictures is signed by its artist.¹⁰³ Eight artists are involved, and the most interesting point is that each artist was not assigned a complete gathering, but that several cooperated on a single gathering.¹⁰⁴ Analogously, we might expect that also in a large commission of ivory plaques a group of carvers would begin together on an early episode and, as they moved along, divide the following sequences of scenes among them. This would explain why in the extant plaques, which deal essentially with the Anianos episode, several hands are employed on this one section of the cycle.

¹⁰² Maclagan, "An Early Christian Ivory Relief" (*supra*, note 14), 193.

¹⁰³ *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano greco 1613)*, Codices e Vaticanis selecti, VIII (facsimile) (Turin, 1907).

¹⁰⁴ About the principle of distribution, cf. I. Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologion of Basil II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 16 (1962), 245ff.

Two plaques, the Raising of Lazarus (fig. 12) and the Miracle of Cana (fig. 13), depict events from the New Testament. These are difficult to compare because in the one we deal with rather static figures clad in long robes, and in the other with scantily dressed servants in action. Thus I should like to leave open the question of whether one or two artists are involved, for even if the plaques belong to the same set, which seems quite likely, more than one artist may, as with the St. Mark plaques, have been employed for a larger commission.

In the Lazarus plaque all figures are more rigid than in any of the St. Mark plaques, and their proportions are more elongated. Both features imply a progressive dematerialization. The folds of the garments avoid curved lines wherever possible and in their harsh linear quality they go beyond even the later panels of the St. Mark set. The awkward pose of the crouching sister in comparison with the comfortably seated Salome of the Nativity (fig. 2) indicates that a considerable amount of time must have passed between the earliest and the latest ivories of the entire group. The mannerism which reached its height in the Lazarus plaque can also be discerned in the Cana plaque in the pose of the servants—the uneasy balance of one and the exaggerated straddle of another—and in the different ways the tunics are designed, the one of the servant at the right being tucked up.

The last plaque shows St. Peter dictating to St. Mark (fig. 14). One may at first glance be inclined to consider it part of the St. Mark series, because of the type of the Apostle, similarly emphasizing the bald head and pointed beard. The iconography of the scene, however, suggests a different context. There is a type of Gospel book which presents as title miniatures each of the four evangelists with an accompanying person: Mark, as in the ivory, takes dictation from Peter and Luke from Paul, while Matthew and John are each assisted by a scribe, who in the case of John is usually Prochoros.¹⁰⁵ Thus, it seems more likely that our ivory plaque is one of four of a similar set. It remains, however, an open question whether they were made as an independent unit or were part of a larger set of New Testament scenes, of which the Raising of Lazarus and the Miracle of Cana are also remnants.

The earliest existing miniature with Peter dictating to Mark appears in a Greek Gospel book in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, cod. 524, from the first half of the tenth century (fig. 43).¹⁰⁶ In this miniature, which reverses the composition, despite extensive flaking the details are very clear: the pose of Mark, writing in the book on his lap and with one leg drawn back, agrees with the figure in our plaque. Yet, as is usual in the iconography of the Middle Byzantine period, he is not bald, and his beard is not pointed. Another and quite essential difference lies in the form of the seat: in the miniature Mark sits on a bench-like chair, typical of the Middle Byzantine period, while in the ivory each

¹⁰⁵ J. Weitzmann-Fiedler, "Ein Evangelientyp mit Aposteln als Begleitfiguren," *Adolph Goldschmidt zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1935), 30ff.; C. Nordenfalk, "The Apostolic Canon Tables," *Essais en l'honneur de Jean Porcher = Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 62 (Juillet-Août, 1963), 32 and fig. 16.

¹⁰⁶ *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, Catalogue of an Exhibition Held at the Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore, 1947), 136, no. 695, and pl. C. I wish to thank the Walters Art Gallery for its kind permission to reproduce this unpublished miniature.

figure sits on a *faldistorium*, a folding chair, and Peter's is adorned with a dolphin as an armrest. This is a typical piece of ancient furniture, which is seen in a very similar shape and also with an armrest in the form of a dolphin on an ivory in the Bargello in Florence (fig. 44),¹⁰⁷ dating from the turn of the fourth to the fifth century.¹⁰⁸ In the Middle Ages this type of chair was no longer used and where it does occur it is no longer understood and thus is misrepresented, as, for instance, in a Palaeologan miniature in London.¹⁰⁹

From the stylistic point of view also the London plaque is closer to the Lazarus plaque than to those with the life of St. Mark, because of its advanced mannerism. In the figure of St. Peter the patternization of the evenly-spaced rhythmic fold lines which, for instance over the left shoulder, endangers the clarity of the body structure, goes beyond that of any other plaque of our group. The same is true in the figure of St. Mark, in the upper part of whose body the clear distinction between the tunic and the mantle is sacrificed to the linear rhythm of the folds. The height of the chairs with the resulting dangling of the feet over the footstools seen in bird's-eye view indicates a degree of abstraction higher than in any other plaque. We seem to deal here with an artist different from the one who carved the Lazarus plaque, despite the stylistic affinity of the two ivories.

If I am not mistaken, three phases can be distinguished within the Later Group: the first, represented by the plaques with the life of St. Mark where, I believe, several carvers cooperated on a large enterprise; the second, by the two New Testament scenes; and the third, by the Peter and Mark plaque. Whereas the products of the first phase still show links with those of the Earlier Group, maintaining a certain amount of soft modelling in the draperies, those of the second phase reveal a hardening of the style, and finally, in the last plaque, this tendency has led to a certain capriciousness and affectation. The suggested division into an Earlier and a Later Group implies that there must have existed a very active atelier which was productive for several generations and of whose works only a scattered few seem to have survived.

V. THE DATE LIMITS

Having set forth the reasons for my doubts that a single object connected our ivories, and having argued for subdivided groups, the next questions are: (a) within what time span did the atelier work, and, (b) how can we define more precisely this span in chronological terms. It must be made clear that no feature

¹⁰⁷ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 57–108 and pl. 32.

¹⁰⁸ In a fresco from the Old Library of the Lateran, dated in the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), Augustinus sits in a similar chair but without the dolphin armrest. J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, IV, pl. 140, no. 2.

¹⁰⁹ London, British Museum, Add. 39591, fol. 124v.; J. P. Gilson and E. G. Millar, *Reproductions from Illuminated Manuscripts. British Museum, Series IV* (London, 1928), pl. ix. Here dated too early (eleventh–twelfth century); the manuscript surely is not before the thirteenth century.

in the ivories links them with any historical evidence. We are thus left to depend solely on stylistic criteria and on the affinity of the ivories to other works of art which can be more precisely dated. There are two stylistic features most characteristic of our plaques — the peculiar design of the drapery which develops gradually into a linear system and the manner in which the eyes are “drawn,” giving them a very pronounced stare.

A. THE DOUBLE-LINE FOLD SYSTEM

In describing the stylistic development within our ivories, particularly stressed was the treatment of the drapery, which in the Earlier Group was still related to the classical tradition while in the Later it developed double-line folds and a decorative system which gradually lost its original purpose of modelling the body and became instead a mere pattern. An example *par excellence* of this style is the richly illustrated manuscript of the *Sacra Parallela* in Paris, cod. gr. 923, ascribed above to Palestine and the first half of the ninth century (cf. p. 55).¹¹⁰ In the miniature of Christ addressing two disciples (fig. 45) one will notice that a double-line fold system is the dominating motif and the net of black lines which it forms on a solid gold ground enhances its graphic quality. We find the same linear ductus in all the works executed about the same time for Pope Paschal I (817–824) in Rome—in the mosaics with which he had decorated various churches in Rome, such as the St. Zeno chapel in S. Prassede (fig. 46)¹¹¹ and also in the silver boxes in the treasure of the Sancta Sanctorum.¹¹² This particular style, then, prevailed in the East as well as in the West and pervaded all techniques. We find it also in an icon from Mount Sinai representing St. Chariton and St. Theodosios (fig. 47)¹¹³ dated by Sotiriou—I believe, correctly—in the eighth to ninth centuries. This icon belongs to a group which I should like to ascribe to Palestine, a group of which, however, only the later icons show the peculiar double-line fold system. We find this system even in an ivory in the Berlin Museum representing the coronation of an emperor named Leo on one side, and Christ between Peter and Paul on the other (fig. 48).¹¹⁴ While this ivory was traditionally considered to represent the coronation of Leo VI, in a recent study¹¹⁵ I have argued in favor of Leo V, whose coronation took place in 813, an occasion for which the ivory most likely was made. In the corpus of the tenth- to eleventh-century Byzantine ivories this plaque had always stood out as unrelated to any ivory of the Macedonian Renaissance. The clearly marked double-line fold system of its draperies moves it much closer to the miniature, mosaic, and icon cited above, all of which are typical examples of what now

¹¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 56.

¹¹¹ Wilpert, *Mosaiken und Malereien*, III, pl. 115.

¹¹² A comparison between a miniature of the Paris. gr. 923 and one of the Paschal silver reliefs is made in K. Weitzmann, “Ivory Sculpture of the Macedonian Renaissance,” *Kolloquium über Frühmittelalterliche Skulptur*, Vortragstexte 1970 (Mainz, 1971), 11 and pl. 15,2; 16,1.

¹¹³ G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*, I, pl. 29; II, p. 43.

¹¹⁴ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, 52, no. 88, and pl. xxxv.

¹¹⁵ Weitzmann, “Ivory Sculpture of the Macedonian Renaissance,” 11 and pl. 14 a–b.

appears to have been the prevailing style from the turn of the eighth to the ninth century in Palestine, Rome, and Constantinople.

When did this formal convention of the double-line fold originate and how long did it prevail? It cannot be the purpose of this paper to deal in great detail with this problem; it must at present suffice to provide a framework into which our ivory group can be fitted. In an attempt to fill the gap between the sixth-seventh centuries on the one hand and the second half of the ninth century on the other (i.e., the period shortly before and of Iconoclasm) the icons from Mount Sinai¹¹⁶ will play an important role. While these cannot be dated with certainty, their relative chronology can be established, based on the assumption that in Palestine, then under Moslem rule, Iconoclasm did not interrupt their production. An often published icon of the Crucifixion, of which the figure of John (fig. 42)¹¹⁷ has already been mentioned, shows in the colobium of Christ and the garments of the Virgin the first indications of a double-line fold pattern, and the same is true of a Crucifixion fresco in the Theodotus chapel in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome, executed under Pope Zacharias I in the middle of the eighth century, a date I should like to apply also to the Sinai icon.¹¹⁸ Yet, a very clear instance of the double-line fold system occurs as early as the mosaics of S. Apollinare in Classe, in the garments of Abraham leading Isaac to the altar in one of the two panels added during the episcopate of Reparatus (673–679).¹¹⁹ As Demus has made clear, however, only parts of the head, the back, and the left arm of Abraham are original, and therefore this figure cannot be used to prove a seventh-century date for the drapery style. Demus,¹²⁰ citing Ricci, mentions restoration undertaken in the ninth century and this would, indeed, be the most plausible date for the restored portions of the Abraham figure. Although admittedly the evidence here offered is not conclusive, it would seem that the characteristic double-line fold system started or at least became widespread some time in the eighth century.

How long did this drapery style predominate? In Constantinople the Macedonian Renaissance brought about its end by reverting to a more classical drapery whose folds follow the laws of gravity and whose surface is enlivened by sparkling highlights. Already in manuscripts of the second half of the ninth century such as the Cosmas in the Vatican, cod. gr. 699, and the Gregory in Paris, cod. gr. 510, this style, typical also of all tenth-century ivories, has replaced that of the Leo ivory (fig. 48). From Constantinople the new style of the Macedonian Renaissance spread quickly to Italy, but in some East Christian

¹¹⁶ The first volume of the author's comprehensive publication of the Sinai icons, comprising those from the 6th–10th centuries, has gone to press.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *supra*, note 96.

¹¹⁸ The two Crucifixions are reproduced side by side in K. Weitzmann, "The Classical in Byzantine Art as a Mode of Individual Expression," *Byzantine Art, an European Art* (Lectures held at the Byzantine Exhibition, Athens 1964) (Athens, 1966), 153 and figs. 116–17. *Idem*, "Various Aspects of Byzantine Influence on the Latin Countries from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century," *DOP*, 20, (1966), 9 and figs. 13–14.

¹¹⁹ The latest writing on these mosaics is found in O. Demus, "Zu den Apsismosaiken von Sant'Apollinare in Classe," *Jahrbuch der Österr. Byzantinistik*, 18 (1969), 230 ff. and fig. 3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 230 and 234.

churches the double-line fold system persisted for some time. We can see striking examples of it in the fresco paintings of Nubia, especially those in the cathedral of Faras where, after an initial phase dependent on the Coptic tradition, a second phase, termed the "white style," shows clearly the impact of the double-line fold system. This phase can be dated in the second half of the ninth century, and in my opinion it was the influence of Palestinian models which precipitated the decisive change of style.¹²¹ In the "white style" we encounter a late stage in the stylistic development in which the double lines broaden and gradually assume the character of embroideries sewed onto the garments.

Another reflection of the double-line fold system can be seen in the frescoes of the monastery of Der es Surian in the Wadi Natrun in Egypt. In the church of the Holy Virgin there are three semi-domes decorated with the representations of great feasts: the Nativity and the Annunciation (together), the Ascension, and the Koimesis (fig. 49)¹²² which according to Evelyn-White belong in the period of the Abbot Moses of Nisibis (926-927) as do the wood and ivory doors from the monastery (pp. 47 and 87). In the manner in which the double folds form strands that seem to be detached from the garments, the Virgin's cloak in the Koimesis fresco actually comes closest to the advanced style seen in one of the ivories of the St. Mark story (fig. 10), as well as in the Lazarus and the Peter and Mark plaques (figs. 12 and 14). At the same time, in the fresco the hardening of the fold system is much more advanced and has led to its greater abstraction so that, despite their affinities, a considerable time lapse between the two classes of monuments must be assumed. It will be noted that these frescoes have Syriac inscriptions and were no doubt executed by Syrian artists in Egypt.

Where, then, do our ivories fit into this roughly sketched development of the drapery style? In the miniatures of the *Sacra Parallela*, the mosaic of the St. Zeno chapel, and the Leo ivory (figs. 45, 46, 48) the style is firmly established, consolidated, and consistent; whereas in the ivories of the Later Group the carvers seem still to be wrestling with a new formal device. I thus propose a date in the eighth century for the Later Group, that is to say, about contemporary with the S. Maria Antiqua fresco of the Crucifixion and the corresponding Sinai icon (pp. 68 and 75) which are respectively dated and datable around the middle of the eighth century. At the same time it was noted that in the Earlier Group the fold design had not yet crystallized into a conventional system, and that as a whole the classical heritage was still quite strongly felt. Thus, a date in the early eighth century is most likely, and perhaps even the late seventh must be reserved as a possibility. Because of the almost complete lack of monuments dated or datable in this critical period it seems at this moment preferable not to try to be more specific.

Such a date would be in harmony with the evidence provided so far. It would explain the relative distance from the art around 600, which is still so much

¹²¹ Weitzmann "Some Remarks on the Sources of the Fresco Paintings of the Cathedral of Faras" (*supra*, note 91), 328 ff. and figs. 322-24, 326-27.

¹²² Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādī'n Natrūn*, III (*supra*, note 10), 183 ff. and pls. LVII, LXI and LXII.

surer in its use of the classical vocabulary; it would explain the presence of elements of Umayyad art; and finally it would account for the fact that the ivories are completely devoid of any stylistic features which had developed in Constantinople at the beginning of the Macedonian renaissance at the turn of the ninth to the tenth century.

B. THE FACIAL FEATURES

As mentioned earlier (p. 50), the only study which had seriously attempted, unencumbered by the polarized dates, to find a place for our ivories somewhere within the intervening centuries was that of Nordenfalk, who linked them with the miniatures of the Lindisfarne Gospels (p. 51). There are indeed striking similarities between the head of Matthew in the miniature (fig. 50)¹²³ and that of the striding St. Mark (fig. 11), not only in such details as the double-lined lids framing the eyeball with its staring pupil and the straight-lined treatment of the hair, but also in the harsh and sharp contours of the face and the whole head. In the head of St. John (fig. 51), as Nordenfalk demonstrated in detail, the carefully arranged spiral locks provide a close parallel to the head of St. Menas (fig. 5),¹²⁴ and the beard of Matthew's companion (fig. 52), formed of S-shaped strands, has been compared by him with that of the foremost listener in the Preaching scene (fig. 7).¹²⁵ Saxl argued (p. 51) that the peculiar staring effect of the eyes which results from the double line around them had existed long before, and this is certainly true. The consular diptych representing Magnus between the personifications of Roma and Constantinopolis (fig. 53),¹²⁶ of A.D. 518, is a good example of the use of this convention of design giving the same effect one or two centuries before the date to which we should like to ascribe our ivory group. Yet, the eyes of the Consul and of the personifications are set into faces carved with soft modelling and lacking the harsh linear treatment so characteristic of the St. Mark ivories and the Lindisfarne miniatures, which are similar to each other not only in the eyes but in every part of the face. The ivory and miniature have in common a certain degree of abstraction and dematerialization which dates them later than the period of the consular diptychs, when the classical tradition was still considerably stronger.

For the harsh design of the heads in our ivories further parallels can be found in the stucco remains of Khirbat al Mafjar, the palace in Transjordan built by the Caliph Hisham (724-743) (fig. 54).¹²⁷ In the technique in which a knife is used for cutting the stucco, the linear features become even more pronounced and less delicate than in the ivories, but the close parallelism has in this case additional importance in that here we are dealing not with a work of insular art with its own tradition of strong linearism, but with a product of the Near East,

¹²³ Nordenfalk "Eastern Style Elements in the Book of Lindisfarne" (*supra*, note 33), 161 ff. and figs. 3-4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, figs. 5-6.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, figs. 7-8.

¹²⁶ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 29, no. 24, and pl. 5.

¹²⁷ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar* (*supra*, note 59), 233 and pl. LV, 2.

where we must seek also the home of our ivories. A still later example of this peculiar facial treatment is found in the ivory in Berlin with the coronation of a Byzantine emperor, whom I believe to be Leo V (cf. p. 74) whereby it would be dated A.D. 813. Most probably made in Constantinople, its style is not as harsh—as far as its rubbed condition permits any such judgment—as that of our ivories and the stuccos of Khirbat al Mafjar.

Thus, the double-line fold system and the linear design of the staring eyes cover approximately the same period and are actually expressions of the same abstraction which reaches in about the eighth century its high-water mark in Byzantine and East Christian art. The Macedonian Renaissance at the turn of the ninth to the tenth century puts an end to this abstract style and reverts to a more classical and natural rendering of both draperies and facial expressions.

Also, then, from the point of view of the rendering of the facial features, one arrives at a date in the eighth or perhaps even the end of the seventh century and I agree basically with Nordenfalk's attribution, although his assumption of an A.D. 700 *terminus ante quem* for the ivories—based on the date of the Lindisfarne Gospels—seems to be too stringent since, as we have tried to demonstrate, the ivories themselves were not all made in one brief period but were produced over several generations. Moreover, if we examine the draperies of the four evangelists of the Lindisfarne Gospels, we find that they are designed in softly curving lines that, in spite of their abstractness, still retain a modelling quality and reveal no knowledge of a double-line fold system, which around the year 700 may not yet have existed. This indicates that the Eastern model for these evangelists may have been closer to the products of our Earlier Group of ivories than to those of the Later Group, in which the system made its first appearance.

C. PALAEOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

Thus far the palaeographical evidence has centered on a single inscription: the monogram for Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ in the Annunciation plaque (fig. 1). While Graeven had used this inscription—the more familiar ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ became prevalent only later—in support of his sixth-century date, Strzygowski immediately thereafter made it clear that the older form continued for quite a while in Egypt, without however giving any examples. Several of the Coptic manuscripts from El-Hamouly, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York,¹²⁸ contain miniatures of the Virgin from the turn of the ninth to the tenth century still inscribed Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ. There is a Madonna lactans between two angels in the synaxary, cod. M. 612, from the year 893 (fig. 56),¹²⁹ another in the syn-

¹²⁸ *Manuscripts coptes de la bibliothèque du Couvent de el-Hamouly. Fac-similés* (Paris, 1911); H. Hyvernât, *A Check List of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1919); A. van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*, I (Louvain, 1929).

¹²⁹ B. da Costa Greene and M. P. Harrsen, *The Pierpont Morgan Library. Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts Held at the New York Public Library* (New York, 1934), 1, no. 1, and pl. 1; *Pagan and Christian Egypt. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum*, 1941, p. 17, no. 12, and fig. 12; M. Cramer, *Koptische Buchmalerei* (Recklinghausen, 1964), 59 and fig. 64.

axary, cod. M. 577, dated 895,¹³⁰ and a third in the cod. M. 600, dated 906, in which the Virgin and Child are placed in a lower crossbar¹³¹—all inscribed with the old-fashioned monogram. In a fourth El-Hamouly synaxary, cod. M. 914, there is an Annunciation miniature where the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ appears above the Virgin, not in the form of a monogram but written out.¹³² It occurs even as late as A.D. 990 in a hagiographic manuscript in London, Brit. Mus., cod. or. 6782, here, too, written out.¹³³ A precise date cannot be given for the replacement in Egypt of Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ by Η ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΒ, but this replacement surely occurred under the impact of a new influence from Byzantium. In a miniature of a Gospel book in the Vatican Library, cod. copt. 9, from the year 1205, a Virgin Orant is depicted beside St. John, in a style very close indeed to a Byzantine model and inscribed with the new epithet.¹³⁴

The fact that the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ was no doubt very popular in Egypt and the assumption that it was restricted to that country have, from the very beginning, induced such scholars as Graeven and Strzygowski to argue for the attribution of our Annunciation to Egypt. Yet, the inscription can be demonstrated to have existed also in other centers of the Eastern Christian world during the Early Byzantine period and to have simply survived longer in Egypt than elsewhere. Notably, it occurs, written out, in the apse mosaic of the Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti, Cyprus,¹³⁵ which has thus—without justification—been attributed to an Alexandrian influence. This mosaic was considered an isolated case outside of Egypt until recently the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ was discovered in quite a number of early icons at Mt. Sinai. To the three icons published by the Sotirious,¹³⁶ who were inclined, largely on the basis of these inscriptions, to attribute them to an Egyptian workshop, I myself added another Sinai icon from the seventh century with the Chairete, in which one of the two Marias is so inscribed, and argued a Palestinian origin for this entire group.¹³⁷ The old-fashioned monogram is found in yet another Sinai icon, hitherto unpublished, with the half-figure of the Hodegetria (fig. 57). This Virgin is an example of the latest phase of the Palestinian school, before it succumbed to a new wave of Constantinopolitan influence: the double-line folds of her paenula are of a very rigid and degenerated form, and for this reason I propose for the icon a date in the eighth to ninth centuries. Once more we cannot determine the precise date when the epithet ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΒ superseded the earlier one in

¹³⁰ Cramer, *op. cit.*, 59f. and pl. VII (in color).

¹³¹ Cramer, *op. cit.*, 60 and pl. VIII (in color).

¹³² Da Costa Greene and Harrsen, *op. cit.*, 5, no. 8, and pl. 7; E. D. Ross, *The Art of Egypt through the Ages* (London, 1931), pl. 255,3; V. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie* (Heidelberg, 1936), pl. 18; *Pagan and Christian Egypt*, 18, no. 14, and fig. 14; Cramer, *op. cit.*, 65 and fig. 69.

¹³³ W. de Gruneisen, *Les caractéristiques de l'art copte* (Florence, 1922), pl. XLV.

¹³⁴ H. Hyvernat, *Album de paléographie copte* (Paris, 1888), pl. LI; Cramer, *op. cit.*, 87 and pl. XIII.

¹³⁵ C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 189 and pl. XVIII,2 (with older bibliography).

¹³⁶ G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*, I, pls. 24, 25, 28; II, pp. 38, 40, 42.

¹³⁷ K. Weitzmann, "Eine vorikonoklastische Ikone des Sinai mit der Darstellung des Chairete," *Tortulae, Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten* = *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 30 Supplementheft (1966), 318, 324, and pl. 80.

Syria and Palestine. We find, in the Patriarchal Library of Homs, the later form in a miniature of a Syriac Gospel book of the year 1054, where the Virgin standing frontally unrolls a scroll with the beginning of the *Magnificat* in Greek and Syriac.¹³⁸ Here too the new inscription goes hand in hand with a revitalized Byzantine style which actually reached Syria and Palestine earlier than it reached Egypt.

Thus our investigation of the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ complements the broad framework furnished by our previous evidence: it can neither be used to support a date around 600 nor is it likely to have existed as late as the eleventh-twelfth centuries, except in very provincial areas. Furthermore, it offers no support for an Egyptian origin.

The few additional inscriptions found in our ivory group are of two different kinds: first, names and captions, and second, running text, filling a book page or a scroll. The carvers made a clear distinction between the two: for the former they used a more hieratic script and a more elaborate technique whereby the letters are in fairly high relief, while in the latter they employed slightly more cursive letters and a technique of incision. To the first category belongs the inscription ΠΑΒΡΙΗΛ in the Annunciation plaque, carved in the high-relief technique (fig. 1). Traditionally, as we see in the consular diptychs, inscriptions were set off from the representation proper by a separate strip, often a *tabula ansata*, as in the plaque with the Archangel Michael in London (fig. 37), the only plaque with a raised inscription known to be earlier than our Annunciation plaque. Innovations in the Annunciation plaque are the placing of the inscription on the undecorated background and the vertical arrangement of the letters. Neither feature appears before the seventh century, so that from the palaeographical point of view also a date in the late sixth century or around 600 must be ruled out. The more characteristic letters find parallels in inscriptions of some of the early Sinai icons. The alpha with the slightly ascending crossbar may be compared to that in the Paulos inscription on a seventh-century diptych wing,¹³⁹ the beta with a smaller upper loop and a larger one at the bottom to that in the Abraham inscription of the encaustic painting on marble, also of the seventh century,¹⁴⁰ the lambda with the hasta bending over at the top to that in the inscription of Basil¹⁴¹ on an icon which I should like to ascribe to the seventh-eighth centuries.

The second inscription with letters in relief, on the London plaque (fig. 14), ΠΟΛΙΣ ΡΩΜΗ, shows a similar lambda and is, in its general character, not essentially unlike the inscription of Gabriel, although its lambda is somewhat more cursive, which may indicate a slightly later date. It is essential to realize that this inscription was not intended to fill an upper border, as it does now, but

¹³⁸ Leroy, *Manuscripts syriaques*, 225ff. and pl. 51,2.

¹³⁹ G. and M. Sotiriou, *op. cit.*, I, pl. 23.

¹⁴⁰ K. Weitzmann, "The Jephthah Panel in the Bema of the Church of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai," *DOP*, 18 (1964), 341ff. and fig. 3.

¹⁴¹ G. and M. Sotiriou, *op. cit.*, I, pl. 20 (which shows this detail somewhat better than pl. 22). A color reproduction in the forthcoming first volume of the Sinai icons by the author will reproduce this detail even more clearly.

that originally this strip separated the lower register of the plaque with St. Peter and St. Mark from the upper register, now lost, which must have depicted a city prospect of Rome.

A second inscription of a name appears on the upper border of the Menas plaque, ⓐ MHNAC (fig. 5). It will be noted that this inscription is incised instead of raised, that it is off center, and that the letters are set in such a way as to appear cut off at the top. Moreover, instead of the form Ο ΑΠΙΟC preceding the name of the Saint, which we find in all early Sinai icons, from roughly the sixth to the eighth century,¹⁴² there is an alpha enclosed within a large omicron, a form which becomes typical only in the tenth century, as evidenced by the icons¹⁴³ and the great mass of ivories of that period. Finally, it was not customary in good Byzantine ivory carvings to use the frame for inscriptions, the only known exception being a plaque of the latest group, the so-called "Rahmen-gruppe," where the inscription Η ΧΥ ΓΕΝΝΗCΙC was apparently incised in at a later time.¹⁴⁴ In all other instances the inscriptions on the frames of Byzantine ivory plaques are in Latin and were likewise added later, when the plaques were reused as bookcovers for Latin manuscripts.¹⁴⁵ For all these reasons I believe that the inscription of our Menas plaque is a later addition, not earlier than the tenth century.

As mentioned above, the two inscriptions with a running text, Joel 2:18 on the scroll held by that Prophet (fig. 4) and the beginning of the Gospel of St. Mark written in the codex held by the Evangelist in the Preaching scene (fig. 7), are in a slightly more cursive ductus. The letters vary in size and are not too carefully aligned, but they are written in basically the same style as the inscriptions with letters in relief. One will note that the carver likes to vary the same letter: for the alpha he uses in some instances a pointed and in others a looped protrusion from the hasta. There are also two different types of ypsilon, the one with a triangular base, the other with the left stroke joining the right one at about the middle. Another idiosyncrasy is the zeta with its bottom stroke turning down slightly at the right. For all these letters, parallels can be found in manuscripts from the seventh-eighth centuries.¹⁴⁶ In general the ductus of the letters can well be compared with that of the inscription on the open scroll held by the prophet Elijah on a Sinai icon, attributable to the seventh century (fig. 58).¹⁴⁷ Except for the zeta, which in the icon has a more flowery ending—a variant occurring in seventh-century manuscripts¹⁴⁸—the letters are very similar. Thus, I feel that in all respects a date for our ivories essentially in the eighth century is supported by the palaeographical evidence.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pls. 15, 20–23, 29–32.

¹⁴³ E.g., the wings with Thaddaeus, Abgarus, and four saints, *ibid.*, pls. 35–36.

¹⁴⁴ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, 74, no. 199, and pl. LXVI.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 50, 140, 151, and 199.

¹⁴⁶ V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Paläographie*, 2nd ed., II (Leipzig, 1913), pl. 2 and pl. 3, first column.

¹⁴⁷ K. Weitzmann, "An Encaustic Icon with the Prophet Elijah at Mount Sinai," *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michałowski* (Warsaw, 1966), 713ff. and fig. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Gardthausen, *op. cit.*, pl. 2, column 7.

VI. THE PLACE OF ORIGIN

Every major artistic province in the Mediterranean has been proposed, at one time or another, as the place of origin of our ivories. Those scholars who stressed their connection with the Salerno antependium and assumed their contemporaneity, tried to find the place of their manufacture in Italy. In addition to Southern Italy, Volbach¹⁴⁹ considered Sicily a possibility, apparently because the Islamic elements which he so strongly emphasized could thus be easily explained. Nordenfalk¹⁵⁰ considered Constantinople as another possibility, in addition to Alexandria. Needless to say, all those scholars who accepted Graeven's theory of the Grado chair favored as the place of origin Alexandria, where, according to the tradition, the Emperor Heraclius had obtained the throne which he gave to Grado. Finally, Volbach, when proposing Sicily also mentioned Syria as an alternative, without giving his reasons.¹⁵¹

If, as we have tried to demonstrate (p. 63), the stylistic connections between our ivory group and the Salerno antependium are not as close as the defenders of a late date have led us to believe—there are reasons to assume that several centuries intervened—then the Italian thesis loses its basis. If our eighth-century date is correct, an Italian origin becomes extremely unlikely. There is no evidence that any school of ivory carvers flourished in Italy at that time, and the only pure Italian piece published in the Carolingian volume of Goldschmidt's ivory corpus—with the exception of a few stray pieces which point to Northern Italy and to connections with transalpine art—is the so-called Rambona Diptych,¹⁵² which is much more primitive than any of our ivories and shows no stylistic connections with them.

The strong feeling of continuity of the classical style, so evident in the Annunciation ivory (fig. 1), points rather to one of the great Eastern centers where there had been no disruptions by barbaric invasions. In addition, the Greek inscriptions, while not unheard of in Southern Italy, nevertheless suggest an Eastern center, either Greek or with a large and flourishing Greek community such as Alexandria or Antioch. Constantinople cannot be entirely excluded as a possibility since the Annunciation plaque (fig. 1) so clearly reflects the style of the capital (fig. 37), maintaining a high degree of delicacy in its carving technique. Yet, within our group this plaque is rather the exception in its dependence on a Constantinopolitan model, and even here a new and more abstract element has been introduced, which strays from the classical tradition that remained so strong at all times in the art of the capital.

Alexandria recommends herself first of all because of the iconography. The extensive cycle of the life of St. Mark with his adventures in nearby Cyrenaica, and the representation of St. Menas in the manner of a cult image, familiar from the countless Menas ampullae and a sixth-century ivory pyxis in the British

¹⁴⁹ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 102.

¹⁵⁰ Nordenfalk, "Eastern Style Elements in the Book of Lindisfarne" (*supra*, note 33), 168.

¹⁵¹ Volbach, "Gli avori della 'Cattedra di S. Marco'" (*supra*, note 28), 137.

¹⁵² A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser*, I (Berlin, 1914), 86, no. 181, and pl. LXXXIV.

Museum,¹⁵³ surely made in Egypt, seem indeed to justify the attribution of our ivories to Alexandria. However, in spite of a strong continuation of classical iconography in Early Christian Egypt, the classical style had begun to decline rapidly after the sixth century to which, for instance, the ivories of the Aachen pulpit (fig. 38) must be ascribed as one of the latest manifestations of reasonably good understanding of the human body and of drapery. Whether we consider sculpture—ivory, stone, wood, bone, or bronze—fresco or miniature painting (fig. 56), or textile weaving, in the seventh century a transformation of the classical forms began, which led to stocky, thickset proportions with unusually oversized heads, a squaring of the figure contours, and a simplification of the linear design, all features that are irreconcilable with the style of our ivories which preserves a higher level of artistic refinement.

This leaves Syria-Palestine as the fourth possibility, and from our previous references to Syria and Palestine the reader may already have guessed that it is to this region that I am inclined to attribute our ivories. This attribution would imply that Syria after the sixth century had maintained a higher artistic standard and a closer dependence on the classical tradition than Egypt. What evidence supports such a statement?

When the vivid pose of the unnamed prophet (fig. 3) was compared with the Moses of a Syriac Bible miniature of the seventh century (fig. 41), a manuscript of a quality not equalled in Egypt at that time was introduced. But while its painterly style is grounded in an uninterrupted tradition beginning with the Hellenistic period, its tendency toward exaggerated gestures, found neither in the reserved style of Constantinople nor in the rigid figure-rendering of Egypt, seems to be typically Syrian. To this tradition belongs the Prophet Joel with his eccentric pose (fig. 4), echoed by the poses in a later Syrian manuscript (figs. 39–40). The double-line fold system, though it also spread through most Mediterranean countries, seems to have developed particularly strongly in Palestine, as witnessed by a number of icons datable in the seventh-eighth centuries (figs. 47, 57) and especially by the miniatures of the *Sacra Parallela* in Paris (figs. 21–22, 45), likewise considered a Palestinian product of the early ninth century. To stress the point once more, no comparable monuments of that time exist in Egypt. The sole exception are the frescoes of Der es Surian in the Wadi Natrun, from the early tenth century, where in the Koimesis fresco (fig. 49) the drapery style of the Virgin is particularly close to that of our ivories, despite its advanced hardening. The comparison may be extended to other details. When one looks at the faces of the Apostles behind the Virgin's bier in the same fresco (fig. 59) one notes the exaggerated, thin ridges of the noses and the unusually tiny mouths in delicately-drawn lines which indeed compare very well with the faces in the Lazarus ivory (fig. 12), though the fresco overstates the mannerisms inherent in both drapery and facial expressions.

It must be realized that these frescoes were executed by Syrian artists on Egyptian soil, and that their work is totally different from and superior to Coptic art of that time. This situation apparently was not unique and might help

¹⁵³ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 83, no. 182, and pl. 56 (here wrongly numbered 181).

to explain the seeming dichotomy within our ivories, whose iconography points to Egypt and whose style I consider Syrian. Could it be that they, too, are products of Syrian artists working in Egypt, perhaps in Alexandria? This seems to me more likely than that they were commissioned by Egyptian patrons and executed in Syria proper, considering that the production of the ivories extended over several generations. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the Syrian frescoes of the Wadi Natrun are not an isolated instance of Syrian influence in Egypt. An Arabic manuscript of the Epistles of St. Paul in Leningrad, dated A.D. 892, contains a full-page miniature with St. Paul and St. Timothy standing side by side,¹⁵⁴ in which the Coptic style shows strong Syro-Palestinian influence, and this explains its higher artistic level compared with any purely Coptic product.

Yet, while on the one hand some Sinai icons which I believe to be about contemporary with our ivories are superior to Coptic icons of that period, they do not on the other hand reach the level of refinement and sophistication of our ivories. We must then seek evidence for, or at least investigate the probability of a highly developed art in Syria in the eighth century. Syria was at that time a Moslem country and we know that she experienced one of her most prosperous periods under the Umayyad caliphs (691–750). Under their rulership the Great Mosque of Damascus and the Prophet's Mosque at Medina were decorated with mosaics, an undertaking for which the Caliph Al-Walid in A.D. 707 had asked the help of the Byzantine emperor who, according to the sources, sent one hundred workmen.¹⁵⁵ Whether all the workmen were indeed Greek has been disputed, but the discovery of the Damascus mosaics under the whitewash has made it very clear that a highly developed style derived from that of Constantinople prevailed in Syria; the same was true in Palestine where at about the same time the Dome of the Rock was decorated with equally splendid mosaics. Under the Caliph Hisham (724–743) the palace of Khirbat al Mafjar was built and embellished with an overly-rich stucco decoration, which I had occasion to introduce in connection with our ivories (p. 57 and text fig. A; p. 57 and fig. 23). Admittedly, the stuccos are rather coarse in style, owing to their merely decorative purpose, but in the same palace were found fragments of frescoes of high quality, some of them figurative, unmatched in Egypt by any painting of that period.¹⁵⁶ At about the same time was erected the palace of Mschatta, whose ornate façade contained, among other motifs, a special type of amphora (p. 58 and fig. 24) which finds its analogy in the ivory of the Cana Miracle (p. 57 and fig. 13). In the early period of the Umayyad caliphate, John of Damascus, the Church Father who wrote the best-known treatise in defense of the images, was the Logothete, the chief representative of the Christians at the court of the Caliph, a function he relinquished in 716 when he withdrew to the Saba monastery near Jerusalem. Under these conditions Christian as well as

¹⁵⁴ K. Weitzmann, "An Early Copto-Arabic Miniature in Leningrad," *Ars Islamica*, 10 (1943), 120 ff. and fig. 1.

¹⁵⁵ H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *DOP*, 12 (1958), 225 ff.

¹⁵⁶ Hamilton, *Khirbat al Mafjar*, pls. LXX–LXXV and XCVII–XCVIII.

Moslem art could flourish, and one can well believe that with the support of John of Damascus and under the protection of the Caliph icons were produced in defiance of the imperial decree. For their ambitious artistic projects the caliphs had to rely to some extent on Christian artisans, who most likely had maintained a workshop tradition in many handicrafts. In this climate the production of ivories such as ours becomes plausible. At this time Egypt had not yet developed any Moslem art of high standards. The first short, flourishing period was under the Tulunids (868–904) and its art was strongly influenced by Syria and Mesopotamia. Only in the Fatimid period (969–1171) did Egypt again develop a highly sophisticated art. If, then, the ivories date mainly to the eighth century, they were most likely produced either in Syria or Palestine, or in Egypt under Syrian influence.

VII. THE USE OF THE IVORIES

The time span of our ivories over a period of several generations excludes the possibility that they were executed to decorate one single object and it is questionable whether among the various objects they did embellish there was a cathedra. What kind of object then could our ivories possibly have adorned? Today we have apparently only remnants of larger cycles, and we must postulate as many objects as there are stylistic groups. While one cannot be precise in every detail, our stylistic analysis indicates that four or possibly five sets are involved.

Possibly the first two ivories (figs. 1–2) belong to one set, and if so one expects this to be a New Testament cycle whose plaques of equal size alternated vertically and horizontally.

The second set would include the two prophets and the two saints (figs. 3–6). Here again it is most likely that at least the two prophets belonged to a larger group which included all the prophets, major and minor, since Joel alone would seem to be out of any iconographical context. Full sets of prophets were familiar in Bible manuscripts like the Syriac codices in Paris and Cambridge (p. 68 and figs. 39–41) and it is more than likely that the ultimate model for the ivories was a series of author figures in such a manuscript. This same set may also have included additional saints, but we cannot speculate about their number since there exists no standard set of saint figures.

The third set comprises the scenes from the Life of St. Mark of which most likely there existed additional plaques illustrating other phases of the missionary activity of this Apostle. Here the loss may have been very substantial, if we assume that the other phases of his life were illustrated in such detail as the Anianos episode. Because of the narrative character of these scenes, the question must be raised whether the archetype was an illustrated *Vita* of the type familiar from the later Middle Ages. How far back illustrated Lives of Saints can be traced—a type of text in which the Lives of the Apostles would figure most prominently—has never been systematically investigated and therefore, at present we must remain in the realm of hypothesis.

For stylistic reasons we separated the Lazarus and Cana ivories (figs. 12–13) from the Annunciation and Nativity. The former suggest that they too once formed part of a major New Testament cycle which may have included other miracle scenes such as one finds, in small scale, grouped around the central figures of Christ and the Virgin in Early Christian ivory bookcovers.

Whether the plaque with St. Peter and St. Mark (fig. 14) was part of this New Testament cycle—a possibility, from the stylistic point of view—remains nevertheless an open question. It may rather have belonged to a set of the four evangelists, which theoretically could have preceded a New Testament cycle.

Aside from a cathedra, the only other object ever suggested to which some of the plaques of our group might have been attached was a book cover. It must be made clear that the only texts ever to be decorated with ivory covers were liturgical, foremost of course the Gospels and the Gospel lectionary. This immediately excludes the plaques with the Life of St. Mark, the prophets and the saints from such a usage. In my opinion the New Testament scenes too must be excluded, since they are too large. Wherever such scenes occur in Early Christian ivory book covers, they frame a central plaque with Christ or the Virgin enthroned and therefore they are of necessity comparatively small.¹⁵⁷ The only ivory which possibly could have adorned a book cover is the Peter and Mark plaque (fig. 14). Surely the whole set of the four evangelists could not have been on a single cover, as does occur in Western art,¹⁵⁸ because of the size of the Peter and Mark plaque. Yet there apparently existed instances where a Gospel book cover was decorated with the plaque of a single evangelist. The plaque with St. John in Halberstadt and another with St. Mark in Münster from around the year 1000 are evidence supporting this contention.¹⁵⁹ But the book cover with a central ivory plaque surrounded by a broad frame of metal is an entirely Western concept. The only type of cover which existed in the East is that described above, with Christ or the Virgin in the center, surrounded by small scenes, the whole surface being covered by a total of five separate plaques. None of our ivories is compatible with this particular arrangement.

One then must search for other objects suitable for decoration with comprehensive sets of ivories of a stately size, i.e., objects of considerable surface area and at the same time objects known to have existed in those regions of the Eastern Mediterranean where most likely the ivories originated. There are two kinds of furniture which fulfill these criteria; both are found in Der es Surian in the Wadi Natrun and both can be dated in the time of Moses of Nisibis, the abbot under whom the frescoes (pp. 76, 83, and figs. 49 and 59) were executed in the first quarter of the tenth century.

Exemplifying the first type is an ebony chest (fig. 60),¹⁶⁰ 1.49 m. long and 0.48 m. high, whose front panel was decorated with seven standing figures, inlaid

¹⁵⁷ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, nos. 119, 125, 127–33, 142, 145, and pls. 37, 39–41, 44, 45, 47.

¹⁵⁸ Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der Karolingischen u. Sächsischen Kaiser*, I, 16, no. 19, and pl. xi. Though cut and reset, the two plaques with the four evangelists must originally have shared a single cover.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, II (Berlin, 1918), 26, nos. 44–45, and pl. xiv.

¹⁶⁰ Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādī'n Natrūn*, III, 195 and pl. LXIII.

with ivory. Though most of the ivory is lost, remnants, especially of the inscriptions, still remain so that, with one exception, all figures can be identified: in the center stands Christ Emmanuel flanked by the Virgin and John the Baptist, and two soldier saints at either side—Eustathios and Theodoros at the left, Jacobos (the Persian) and an unnamed soldier saint at the right. According to Evelyn-White, a similar chest once existed in the White Monastery, “and a paper formerly affixed to the wall of the church here gave a list of relics contained in this coffer until it was thrust out of sight.” He then goes on to describe the relics in detail. Our plaques with St. Menas and the unnamed orant saint (figs. 5, 6) could have belonged to a chest of this type.

One may argue that such a chest could accommodate only a limited number of ivory plaques. But there did exist an Egyptian tradition of chests much larger than the one in Der es Surian. Emery discovered in a royal tomb at Qustul in Nubia (fig. 61)¹⁶¹ a chest 1.05 m. high with six tiers of inlaid ivories, four having figurative plaques. There are altogether twenty-one plaques, executed in incision technique, typical of an Egyptian style from which this rather crude Nubian product surely derives. In the same tomb was found a coin of the Emperor Valens (363–64), dating the tomb and its contents to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. Though derivative and rather barbaric, this object indicates that there must have existed in Egypt chests of considerable size, on the front side of which extensive series of ivory plaques could be displayed.

The second type of furniture, which has a still greater probability of having accommodated rather large sets of ivories like ours, is the church door. In the Latin West a few splendidly decorated huge wooden doors have survived, like those of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan¹⁶² or Santa Sabina in Rome,¹⁶³ both of which decorate the main entrance to the church, whereas in Egypt doors of smaller size decorated with ivory plaques exist in the interior in more sanctified spots, where their precious material is better protected. In the church of the Holy Virgin in Der es Surian there are actually two doors with inlaid ivory plaques, the smaller leading to the choir (fig. 62)¹⁶⁴ and the larger leading to the “haikal,” as the inner sanctuary is called.¹⁶⁵ The first door has altogether twenty-four panels of equal size, four in each of the six horizontal rows; the second, composed of triple folding sections, has forty-two panels, six in each of the seven rows. It is true that only the top row of each of these doors has figurative plaques—the smaller door including at its extreme left the figure of St. Mark that Strzygowski (cf. p. 46) had introduced as an iconographic parallel to the specific type of St. Mark resembling St. Paul, which in his opinion is found only in Egypt. The other panels are merely decorative, a few adorned with Christian crosses, but the majority with ornamental patterns derived from contemporary

¹⁶¹ W. B. Emery, *The Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul. Mission Archéologique de Nubie, 1929–34* (Cairo, 1938), I, 383, no. 881, and II, pl. 109; *idem*, *Nubian Treasure* (London, 1948), pl. 48.

¹⁶² A. Goldschmidt, *Die Kirchentür des Heiligen Ambrosius in Mailand* (Strasburg, 1902).

¹⁶³ J. Wiegand, *Das altchristliche Hauptportal an der Kirche der hl. Sabina* (Trier, 1900).

¹⁶⁴ Evelyn-White, *op. cit.*, 197 ff. and pls. LVIII–LX.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pls. LXIV–LXV.

Islamic art. It is easy to see that these ornamental panels replace what in earlier doors were figurative panels. From an earlier period, i.e., approximately the sixth century, we have an Egyptian door decorated exclusively with figurative panels—in wood instead of ivory—in the Church of St. Barbara in Old Cairo.¹⁶⁶ The shape and uniform size of our ivory plaques would seem to make them quite suitable for the decoration of choir or haikal doors. Such doors could readily accommodate extensive cycles from either the New Testament or the life of a saint, and could also explain a technical detail: most of our plaques have flat flanges at the sides to secure them so firmly to a wooden framework that they could not easily be removed without breakage, a device quite customary with panels in wooden doors—such as the great narthex door in St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai—and even more appropriate for panels made of precious ivory. It is true that the door panels in Der es Surian are not carved reliefs but flat intarsia of ivory set into ebony. This, however, like the preference for ornamental plaques, seems to be the result of Islamic influence. It is well known that wooden doors with ivory inlay were for centuries a standard furnishing in the mosque. Another feature of our ivories, their alternation as vertical and horizontal plaques (figs. 1, 2), would also be easily explained by their use in the decoration of a door. This arrangement is very common in door decoration not only in Egypt, to which once more the door of St. Barbara bears witness, but also in the West, as evidenced by doors such as those of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan and Santa Sabina in Rome. Finally, the uniform size of the plaques (cf. p. 64) is also consistent with the theory that they originally belonged to a door.

Moreover, while ivory doors were apparently popular in Egypt, there is literary evidence that in the Early Middle Ages they existed also elsewhere, including the Latin West. The *Annales* of Einhard of the year 803 contain this revealing passage: *Venit quoque Fortunatus patriarcha de Graecis, afferens secum inter cetera dona duas portas eburneas mirifico opere sculptas*.¹⁶⁷ The text does not explicitly state where Fortunatus, patriarch of Grado, had acquired the doors, but he was a frequent traveller to Constantinople, and the implication is that he brought them from there. One might speculate that they were given to Charlemagne and brought to Aachen, but this cannot be deduced from the rather terse remark of the *Annales*. The only definite conclusion to be drawn from this passage is the existence of ivory doors, imported from the Near East to the Latin West.

VIII. THE PROVENANCE

If our ivories never adorned a cathedra in Grado, then there is no reason to believe that they ever were in North Italy, and this explains why no reflection of their style or iconography is found in Venice. The cycles of the Life of St.

¹⁶⁶ A. Patricolo and U. Monneret de Villard, *La chiesa di S. Barbara* (Florence, 1922), 45ff. and pl. oppos. p. 46, and fig. 20.

¹⁶⁷ MGH, SS, I, p. 191 *ad a.* 803. Cf. also J. Ebersolt, *Orient et Occident* (Paris, 1928), 63–64, and Cecchelli, *La cattedra di Massimiano* (*supra*, note 64), 41 note 4. This passage was called to my attention by Mr. Robert Bergman.

Mark on the Pala d'oro¹⁶⁸ or in the mosaics in San Marco¹⁶⁹ bear no iconographical relation to that of the ivories, a fact which can be explained only in part by the preference of the Venetians for the episodes connected with the transfer of the Saint's relics. Had a rich cycle of the Life of St. Mark existed in nearby Grado, one might expect the Venetians to have utilized it, particularly since for the sake of legitimacy they loved to copy Early Christian monuments¹⁷⁰ such as the Genesis mosaics in the narthex of San Marco, based on the so-called Cotton Genesis,¹⁷¹ and the ciborium columns in alabaster, which must derive from Early Christian illustrated apocryphal Gospels.¹⁷² Furthermore, the existence of our ivory group in Grado during the Middle Ages would contradict the fact that already at the end of the eleventh century they were available in South Italy to the carvers of the Salerno antependium.

In this connection the only information we have about an early provenance for any of our ivories—that for the Lazarus plaque now in London (fig. 12)—is of particular importance since it leads us toward Salerno. There is a tradition that the plaque was in the church of St. Andreas at Amalfi before it went into the museum of the convent of the Holy Apostles at Naples.¹⁷³ Amalfi then might possibly be the location for all the plaques of our group. This important mercantile center on the coast of Positano recommends itself as a transmitter of works of art from the East to the West for three reasons.

First, if our ivories were at Amalfi at least as early as the eleventh century, they would have been in a city which politically and commercially was closely related to Salerno. This is not the place to debate whether the ivories of the Salerno antependium were actually made in that city, but no scholar has ever questioned that they were produced in that part of South Italy, and since, as we have discussed in detail (p. 58), the carvers of the antependium did copy directly some ivories of our group, the geographical proximity of Salerno to Amalfi would explain their direct dependence.

Second, as a trade center with the Near East no Italian city before the Crusades played a greater role than Amalfi. Of this the study of Wilhelm Heyd provides rich documentary evidence.¹⁷⁴ After having established commercial relations with the North African countries closest to Italy, the merchants of Amalfi were the first of the Italian city republics to expand to Egypt and Syria, and the earliest known treaty with Egypt dates from the year 973. The Amalfitans built a hospital in Antioch and there are indications that their connections with the Syrian capital went back to the ninth century.¹⁷⁵ In Jerusalem,

¹⁶⁸ W. F. Volbach, A. Pertusi, B. Bischoff, H. R. Hahnloser, G. Fiocco, *Il tesoro di San Marco. La Pala d'oro* (Florence, 1965), 33ff. and pls. xxxvii–xli.

¹⁶⁹ O. Demus, *Die Mosaiken von S. Marco in Venedig* (Vienna, 1935), 39ff. and figs. 21–22.

¹⁷⁰ O. Demus, "A Renaissance of Early Christian Art in Thirteenth-Century Venice," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A. M. Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), 348ff.

¹⁷¹ Tikkanen, "Die Genesismosaiken, (*supra*, note 68), 99ff.

¹⁷² E. Lucchesi-Palli, *Die Passions- und Endszenen Christi auf der Ciboriumssäule von San Marco in Venedig* (Prague, 1942).

¹⁷³ Dalton, *Catalogue of the Ivory Carvings of the Christian Era* (*supra*, note 13), 21, no. 27.

¹⁷⁴ W. Heyd, *Geschichte des Levantehandels im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1879), I, 109ff.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 115 note 7.

too, they had established a hospital even before the Crusades. Thus, Amalfi is a most likely place for the import of valuable art objects from Syria and Egypt in or before the eleventh century, i.e., at a time when other cities such as Pisa, Genoa, and Venice had not yet replaced Amalfi as the most influential commercial center.

Third, there are indications that Amalfi actually was an important, perhaps the most important, center in South Italy for the production of ivories, and since there was no continuous tradition of this art in this part of Italy from classical times to the eleventh century, it is likely that the stimulus came from imports of those Eastern Mediterranean countries where the manufacture of ivories had never altogether ceased. In the Benedictine monastery of Farfa there is an ivory casket from shortly after the middle of the eleventh century,¹⁷⁶ lavishly decorated with scenes from the Life of Christ and graced by a long inscription which mentions as donor a certain Maurus, who has been identified as a wealthy merchant of Amalfi; therefore, this casket was quite likely produced in Amalfi and, moreover, it shows a style on which the ivories of the Salerno antependium are based.

In addition, Amalfi seems to have attracted Arab craftsmen, who established a very prosperous workshop of ivory carving. Ernst Kühnel has demonstrated¹⁷⁷ that the large group of oliphants, caskets, and other objects decorated in an ornamental animal style are not, as had been assumed, products of Fatimid Egypt but of South Italy, and has suggested Amalfi as the production center on the evidence that a box with writing utensils, now in the Metropolitan Museum,¹⁷⁸ bears the name of Taurus Filius Mansonis incised upon it. Mansone was in the tenth-twelfth centuries the name of one of the leading families of Amalfi and several of its members held the office of doge in that city. In the corpus of Islamic ivories just published Kühnel expands the theory of Amalfi as the possible place of origin of this group, proving that oliphants as such are a Western invention and never existed in the Islamic world proper.¹⁷⁹

To find for our group of ivories its true place in history, evidence has been proffered from as many different angles as possible to support the new date proposed here. In doing so one had to go beyond the strict limits of our ivory group, but some general principles have emerged which have a bearing on the artistic production of the critical seventh and eighth centuries. First, we learned that in some parts of the Christian East there had been a continuous artistic tradition which in Syria led to the production of works of art of higher quality than in Egypt. Apart from the evidence provided by our ivories, proof for this contention was brought forth by the gradual reconstruction of a flourishing

¹⁷⁶ A. B. Schuchert, "Eine unbekannte Elfenbeinkassette aus dem 11. Jahrhundert," *Röm. Quartalschrift*, 40 (1932), 1-11; P. Toesca, "Un cimelio amalfitano," *Boll. d'Arte*, 27 (1934), 537 ff; H. Bloch, "Monte Cassino, Byzantium and the West in the Earlier Middle Ages," *DOP*, 3 (1946), 207 ff. and figs. 250-53.

¹⁷⁷ E. Kühnel, "Die Sarazenischen Olifant-hörner," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 1 (1959), 34 ff.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 48 and figs. 19-20.

¹⁷⁹ E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen. VIII.-XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1971), 18.

material culture at the courts of the Umayyad caliphs and more recently by the study of the early icons of Sinai which permit us to establish in nearby Palestine an artistic continuity from Justinian's age to the tenth century and thereafter. The reason that this Eastern continuity was overlooked is readily found in the deeply rooted conviction of West European scholars that a serious interruption had occurred in the general cultural development, caused by the Migration of Nations in the Latin West and by Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire. It is this concept which, in the case of our ivory group, gave rise to the polarization of a sixth-century date on the one hand and an eleventh-century date on the other—i.e., a date either before the weakening of the classical tradition or after its resumption in various revival movements in the East and the West. Now we must acknowledge that the Latin West, after its recovery, was able to profit from the uninterrupted tradition of the East, learning from Byzantium, which had not experienced barbaric invasions, as well as from other East Christian countries such as Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, particularly in those periods when Constantinople, because of Iconoclasm, was temporarily not in a position to be the arbiter in matters of material culture.



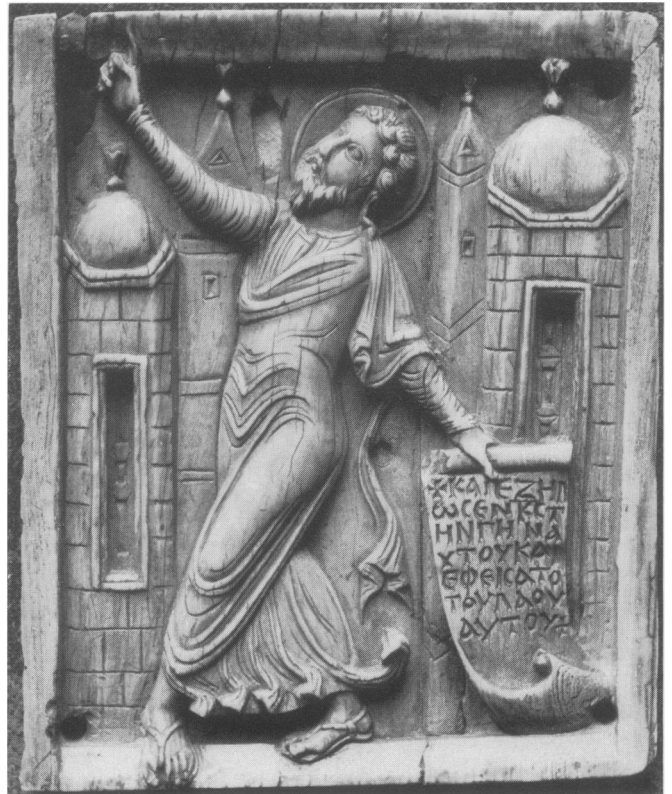
1. Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivory, the Annunciation



2. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks. Ivory, the Nativity



3. Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivory, Prophet



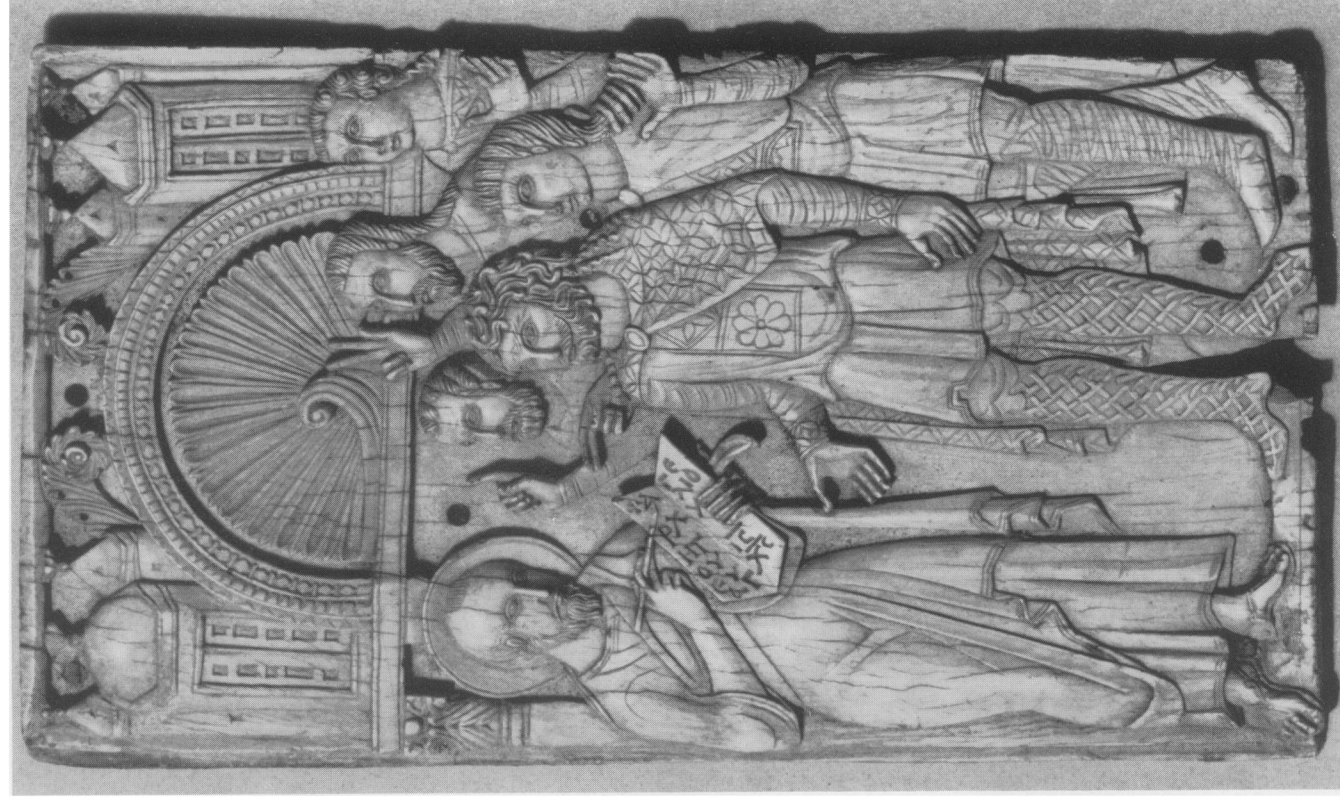
4. Lyon, Collection Côte. Ivory, the Prophet Joel



5. Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivory, St. Menas



6. Paris, Musée de Cluny. Ivory, Orant Saint



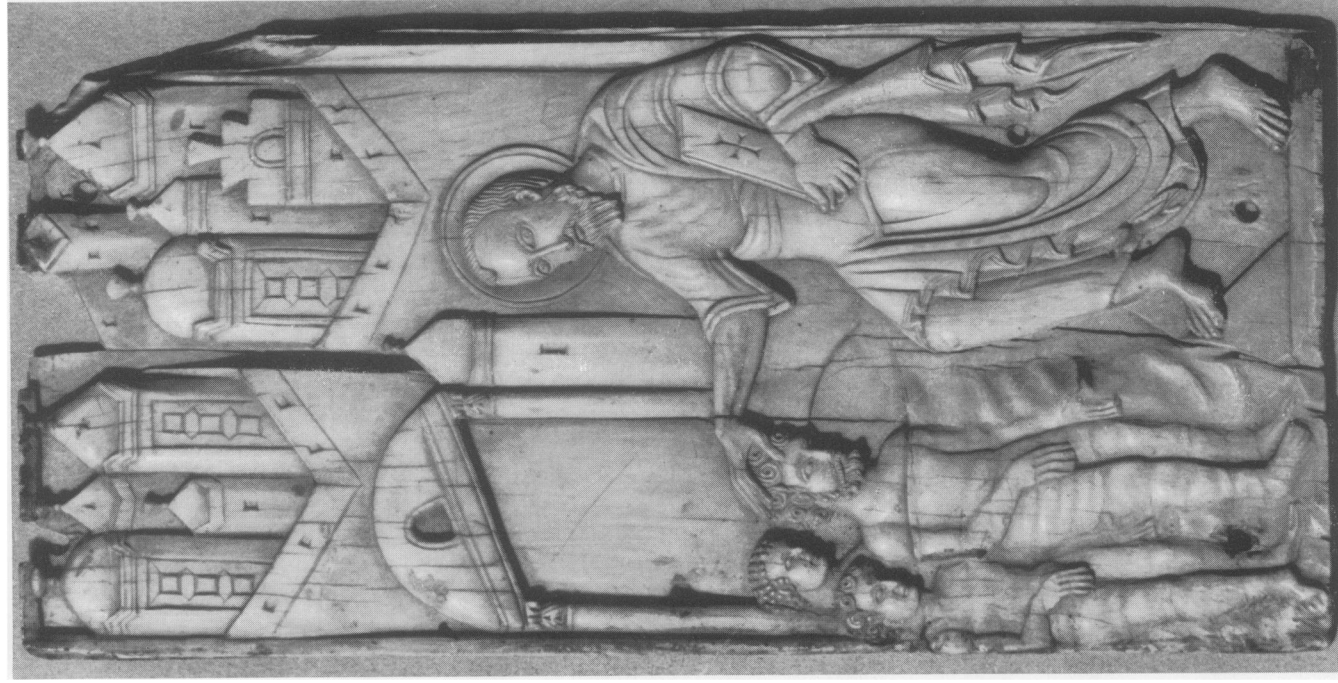
7. St. Mark Preaching

Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivories (slightly reduced)



8. St. Mark Healing Anianos

Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivories (slightly reduced)



9. St. Mark Baptizing Anianos



10. St. Mark Consecrating Anianos

Milan, Museo del Castello Sforzesco. Ivories (slightly reduced)



11. (Fragment) St. Mark



12. London, British Museum.
Ivory, the Raising of Lazarus



13. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.
Ivory (Fragment), the Miracle of Cana



14. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.
Ivory, St. Peter and St. Mark



15. Paris, Louvre. Ivory, St. Mark Enthroned



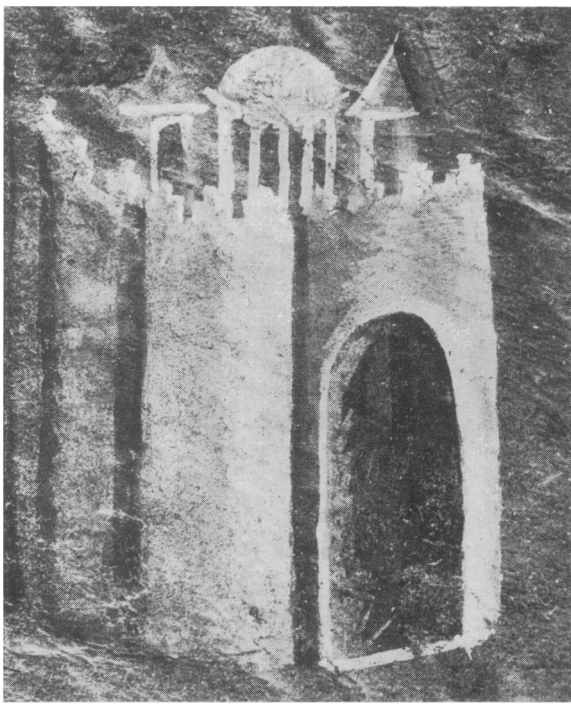
16. New York, Metropolitan Museum. Silver Plate, David before Saul



17. Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum. Marble Relief, St. Menas

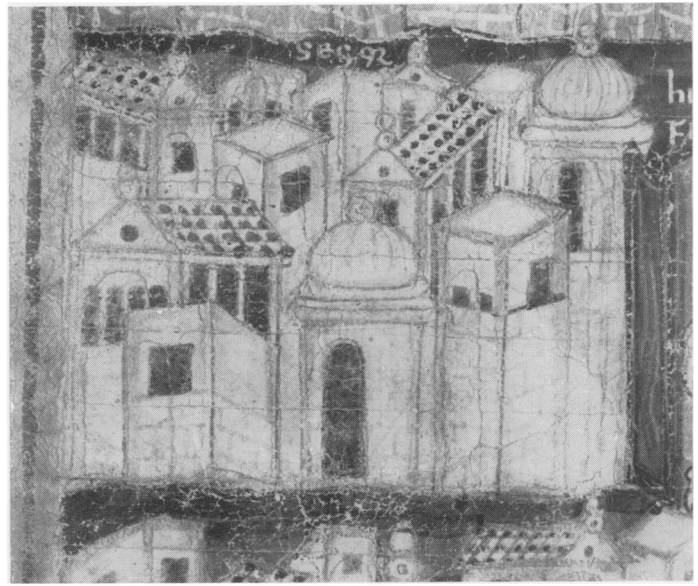


18. Rossano, Cathedral. Gospels, fol. 121r., St. Mark

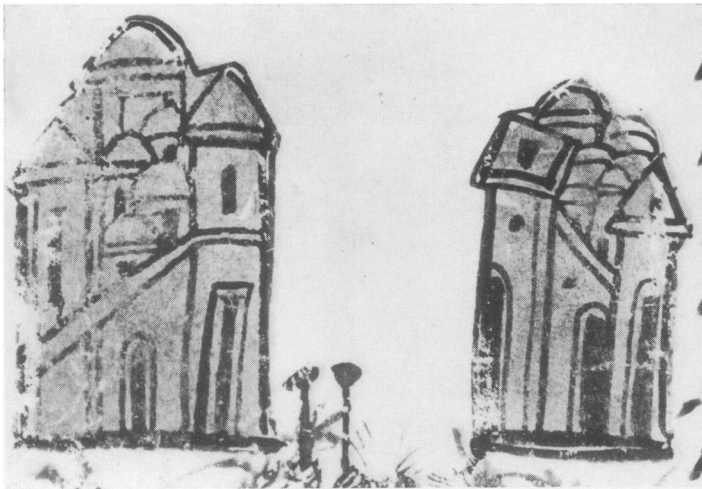


19. Cod. suppl. gr. 1286, fol. 30^v, detail,
City of Jerusalem

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale



20. Cod. nouv. acq. lat. 2334, fol. 18^r, detail, City of Zoar

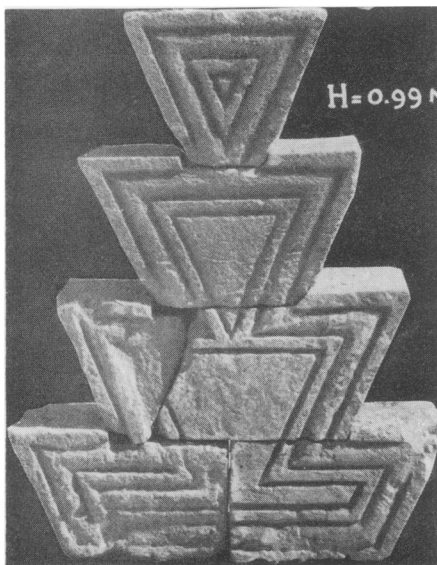


21. Fol. 320^v, detail, Cities of Jerusalem and Jericho

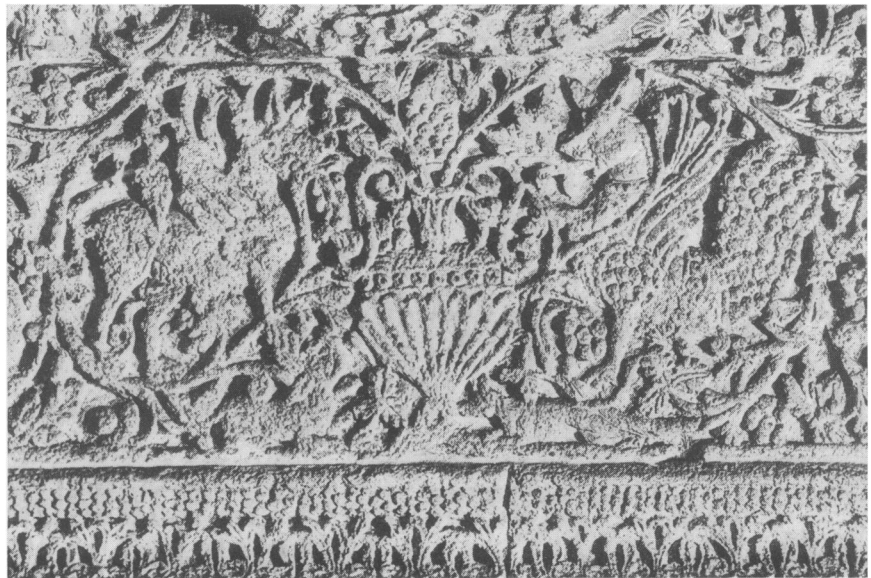
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cod. gr. 923



22. Fol. 373^v, Susanna



23. Khirbat al Mafjar. Crenellation



24. Berlin. Staatliche Museen. Mschatta Façade, detail



25. Salerno, Cathedral. Ivory, detail



26. Rossano, Cathedral. Gospels, fol. 1^r



27. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Ivory
The Raising of Lazarus



28. Salerno, Cathedral. Ivory, detail, the Miracle of Cana



29. Rome, S. Maria Antiqua. Fresco, detail, the Butler before Pharaoh



30. Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Cod. Plut. VI,23, fol. 170v., the Miracle of Cana

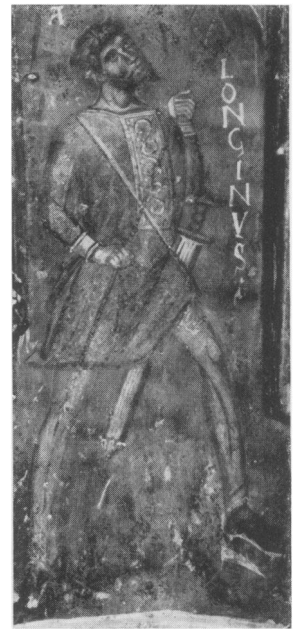


a.



b.

31a-b. Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana Cod. Plut. I,56, fol. 5r., the Miracle of Cana



32. Rome, S. Maria Antiqua. Fresco, detail, Longinus



33. Salerno, Cathedral. Ivory, detail, the Nativity



34. Würzburg, University Library. Ivory, detail, Christ



35. Paris, Musée de Cluny. Ivory, the Death of the Virgin



36. Paris, Louvre. Ivory, detail, Christ



37. London, British Museum. Ivory, St. Michael



38. Aachen, Cathedral. Ivory, Isis



39. Fol. 175v, Joel



40. Fol. 177v, Jonah

Cambridge, University Library, Cod. Oo1.Oo2



41. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cod. syr. 341, fol. 8r.,
Moses before Pharaoh



42. Sinai. Icon, detail,
St. John, from the Crucifixion



43. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery. Cod. 524, fol. 89v.,
St. Mark and St. Peter



45. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Cod. gr. 923,
fol. 269r, Christ and Apostles



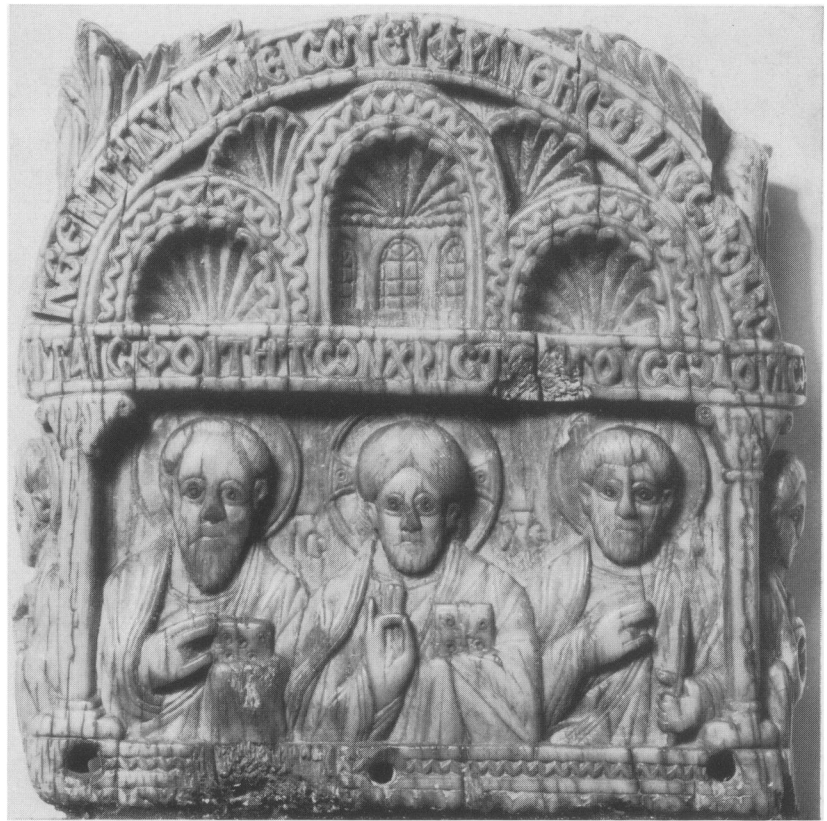
44. Florence, Museo Nazionale. Ivory,
detail, St. Paul



46. Rome, S. Prassede, St. Zeno Chapel.
Mosaic, detail, St. Peter



47. Sinai. Icon, St. Chariton and St. Theodosios



48. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Ivory, Christ between Peter and Paul



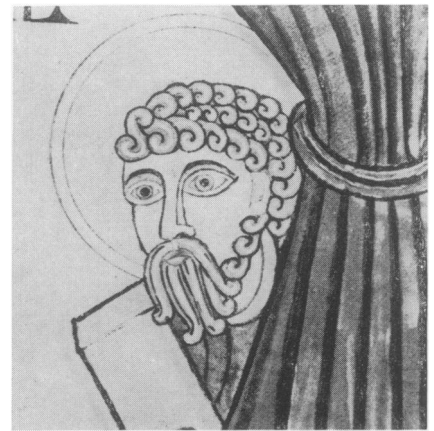
49. Wadi Natrun, Der es Surian. Fresco, detail, the Death of the Virgin



50. Fol. 25v, detail, Matthew



51. Fol. 209v, detail, John
London, British Museum, Cod. Nero D.IV



52. Fol. 25v, detail, Companion
of Matthew



53. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Ivory, detail, Diptych of Magnus



54. Khirbat al Mafjar. Stucco,
detail, Female Head



55. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Ivory, detail, Coronation of the Emperor Leo



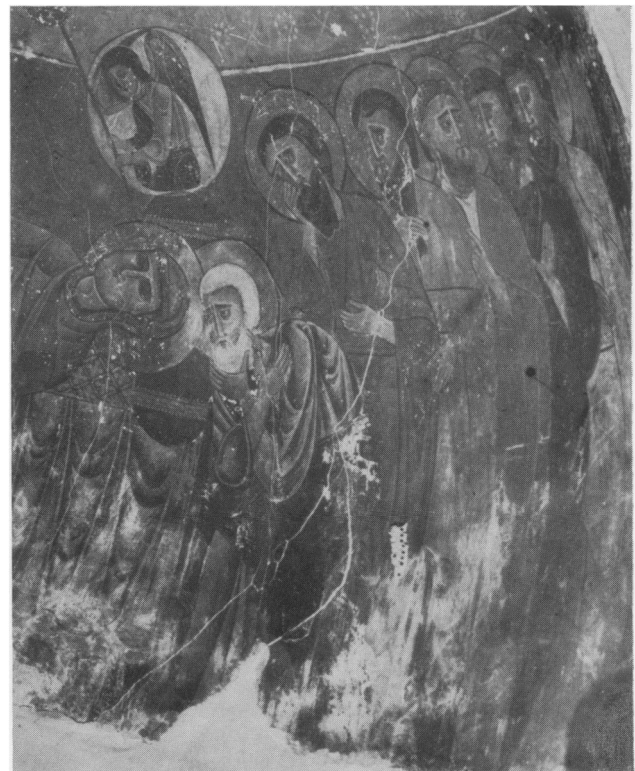
56. New York, Morgan Library. Cod. 612, fol. 1v, the Virgin



57. Sinai. Icon, Hodegetria



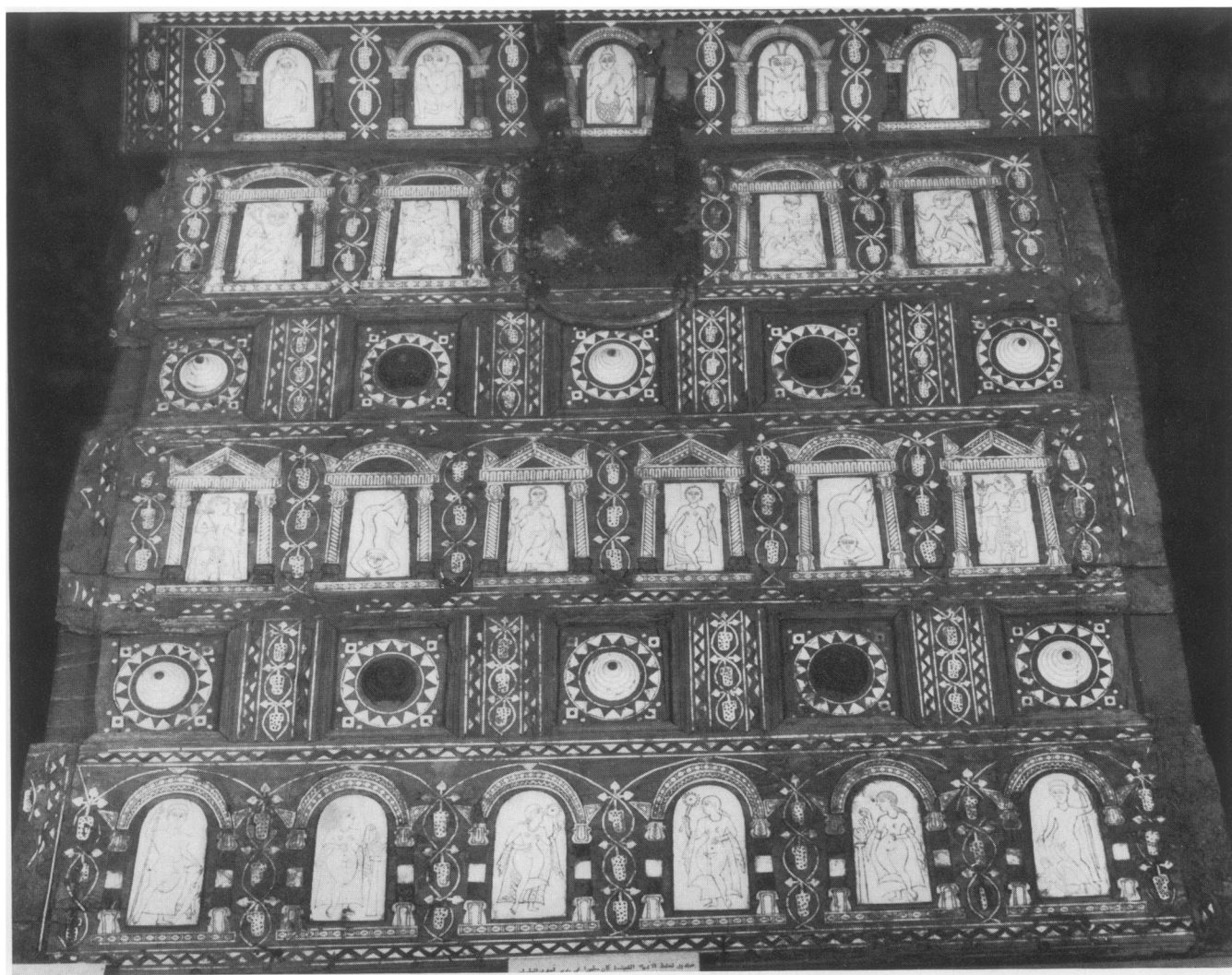
58. Sinai. Icon, detail, Elijah



59. Wadi Natrun, Der es Surian.
Fresco, detail, the Death of the Virgin



60. Wadi Natrun, Der es Surian. Chest



61. Cairo, Egyptian Museum. Chest from Qustul in Nubia



62. Wadi Natrun, Der es Surian. Choir Doors